

Mohammad Hashim Kamali · Osman Bakar  
Daud Abdul-Fattah Batchelor  
Rugayah Hashim *Editors*

# Islamic Perspectives on Science and Technology

Selected Conference Papers

 Springer

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# Preface

The collection of papers that are featured in this book was presented at the International Conference on ‘Developing Synergies Between Islam and Science & Technology for Mankind’s Benefit’, held at the International Institute of Advanced Islamic Studies (IAIS) Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, on 1–2 October 2014.

The conference was formally opened by the former Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, and involved two keynote speeches, invited talks from eminent scholars, and talks by senior scholars, as well as some PhD candidates reporting on their research findings. The conference, consisting of both plenary and parallel sessions, included two open forums: one on bioethics and the other on the teaching and history of Islamic science. Presenter-authors were requested to contribute recommendations that could be taken up by governments, institutions, NGOs, and the public to hopefully ensure beneficial outcomes to sectors of humanity. The conference was closed with discussions on some of the important issues raised.

The conference objectives were:

- To promote a better understanding of the key issues related to religion in general, and to Islam in particular, in the current pursuit of scientific knowledge and in enhancing the well-being of humanity at large
- To address urgent ethical issues related to human biology/medical sciences and impacts on the living environment
- To investigate a more holistic faith-inclusive methodology for the teaching of science in Islamic educational institutions

Of a total of 37 papers presented, 26 were selected for inclusion in the present volume. The papers were wide-ranging in scope and organised under the following four clusters:

- Philosophy of Science, Cosmology and Emergence of Biological Systems
- Tawhidic Science – Principles and General Applications
- Tawhidic Science – Bioethics Applications
- Teaching and History of Science

The overarching theme of the conference included the need to investigate the epistemological and cosmological underpinning of science and technology (S&T) from an Islamic perspective, especially to understand the utilitarian aspects of S&T so as to better serve humanity. This conference aimed at addressing concerns that S&T should not, as appears to some today, be imperilling mankind's very existence, due to its misuse to serve powerful and elite interests. Ethical issues were addressed pertaining to the sound application of the Natural Sciences in serving humanity.

The deep metaphysical and cosmological issues regarding the role of science that can enhance understanding of our position in the 'grand scheme of things' were addressed as also the underlying substratum of current thinking that modern science already knows the answers and the fundamental questions are settled. The major role that religion and Islam, in particular, can play in this regeneration process was underlined. A comprehensive and holistic approach was to be sought that accorded with the principle of Divine Oneness (*Tawhīd*) and the higher goals and purposes (*maqasid*) of Islam.

In what follows, I recapitulate some of the opening remarks that I made at the inaugural session of the conference in my capacity as the host and head of IAIS Malaysia.

Whereas religion and ethics advocate restraint, the globalised world of scientific modernity and technological explosion with their secularist leanings are pushing humanity in the opposite direction, compelling us to raise the question: is there a crisis of values? Science, which is the motive power that propels technology, is the continuous process of interlinking observations and experiences into a coherent and logical structure that is then codified into a body of knowledge. Yet such knowledge remains open to challenge and modification through fresh observation, new experience and creativity of thought.

The benefits of S&T to human well-being are undeniable. Yet the epistemology and method that propel scientific enquiry have followed a questionable trajectory that is blind to value and can advance both benefit and harm. The harmful effects of S&T are threatening human life and the health of its earthly habitat. The purity of the earth's natural environment is being compromised at an alarmingly rapid pace. Science and technology seem to have closed the doors to wisdom that one needs to know how best to make use of them.

Our space is more crowded than ever before by a multitude of philosophical views and outlooks on how to understand religion and science and how to see the notions of progress, human well-being and ethics through their lenses. At one extreme we have the secular humanists arguing that modern science provides a necessary and sufficient basis for life and learning. From this viewpoint, religious worldviews are at best inconsequential and at worst an obstacle to human progress.

Muslim scientists were successful in their contributions to science and civilisation when they maintained the nexus between existential reality and its metaphysical dimension, a theo-centric value order that guided their scientific enquiry, and their quest for knowledge and truth. Reality according to this outlook was not limited to the world of sensory experience but extended to the non-physical world, the '*alam al-ghayb*', as in the language and attestation of the Qur'an.

The fruits of scientific enquiry and innovation in its Islamic vision belong to all of mankind. This is the inalienable implication of the principle of *Tawhīd*, the Oneness of Being that runs deep in shaping the Islamic worldview and epistemology of knowledge. When S&T are informed by faith and ethics, they must serve the human interest and advance the efflo-

rescence of a humane society and civilisation. Yet the prevailing scientific modernity subscribes to the view that science has no need for religion and views religion as the enemy of science. The Islamic view is that religion and science are truly in need of each other. This would explain why there is a need to present a credible critique of the epistemology of contemporary S&T. I believe that Islam's spiritual and intellectual resources and its holistic vision of scientific enquiry can make a significant contribution to the creation of a new scientific and technological culture that is focused on serving the interests of the whole of humanity.

Because of the diversity of themes and topics, there would be papers of interest to a large and broad group of academics and practitioners, from Islamic scholars and social scientists to physical scientists and engineers in a whole gamut of disciplines. This book should be of benefit to students, scholars and lay persons, Muslim and non-Muslims alike, who wish to obtain a more holistic understanding of Islam and science for humanity's benefit. Non-Muslims would be able to see the contributions Islam can make for the betterment of the world. It is also an important role for scientists of all persuasions to cooperate for the betterment of human society and the global environment.

A great deal of enthusiasm was generated in the conference discussions, especially during the concluding plenary session, on the importance of the chosen conference theme. Many prominent speakers recommended that this conference should be followed up and made into an annual event. It was also widely acknowledged that contributions to the natural sciences from the Muslim world were in short supply and need to be addressed. On behalf of IAIS Malaysia, I do hope we can actualise that recommendation to organise follow-up events on this or allied topics in the future. We are certainly working on beefing up one of the five of IAIS's research units on science, technology, environment and ethics from our own resources. For a follow-up and annual event, IAIS would need sponsorship and we plan to solicit outside support for this purpose.

It remains for me to thank Y.A.B. Tun Abdullah Haji Ahmad Badawi, former Prime Minister of Malaysia, for kindly accepting to officiate the opening of the conference and to record my appreciation and gratitude to the conference co-organisers, event partners and all those who supported IAIS Malaysia in this endeavour. We organised this event jointly with the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), the Academy of Islamic Studies, Universiti Malaya (AIS-UM) and the Sultan Omar 'Ali Saifuddin Centre for Islamic Studies (SOASCIS), University of Brunei Darussalam with the support also of Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) and the National Centre of Excellence for Islamic Studies, Griffith University, Australia. Having had the benefit of attending the conference sessions and reading the papers presented, I take this opportunity to commend the efforts and contributions of our learned speakers, authors and presenters whose deliberations and insights helped to make this international conference a success and also make the publication of the present volume possible.





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**Part I**  
**Opening Section**

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

**Osman Bakar and Daud Abdul-Fattah Batchelor**

This book comprises selected articles that are based on papers presented at the International Conference on *Developing Synergies between Islam and Science & Technology for Mankind's Benefit* held at IAIS Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, on 1–2 October 2014. The articles deal with various aspects of the central theme of the Conference, namely, the possible synergies that can be developed between Islam, science and technology (S&T) with the view of ensuring that the pursuit of S&T is for the benefit of the whole of humanity. Their authors are scholars, academics and researchers representing various academic disciplines, some of whom are of international repute in their specialised fields. However, despite the variety of issues treated and the diversity of approaches adopted in these articles in response to the Conference theme and subthemes, the common thread that runs through all of them is the high relevance of Islam in its multidimensional relations with S&T.

The book has a precious message for both Muslims and non-Muslims alike. The significance of this volume is that, taken together and viewed as a whole, the articles provide a multi- and interdisciplinary treatment of the interrelationship between Islam and S&T that can throw much light on what Islam is able to contribute to the present humanity in the creation of a new scientific and technological culture in the twenty-first century founded on universal spiritual, intellectual and moral-ethical values. The relevance of the religion and civilisation of Islam to the contemporary issues posed by the application of S&T is clearly demonstrated in this volume. Of particular importance is the claim made by Islam that as a religion and as a civilisation, not only is it keen to offer the world a new appreciation of S&T that would be truly beneficial, but it also has the resources to do so. The various Islamic perspectives on S&T presented in the articles comprising this volume, significantly displaying both variety and unity, may be viewed as a comprehensive but critical re-examination of the mainstream thinking on the meaning and significance of the human pursuit of S&T. The world has good reason to listen to an Islamic discourse on S&T that conveys ideas and messages relevant not only to the global Muslim

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*ummah*, itself constituting almost one quarter of humanity, but also to the rest of the world. We provide below a brief summary of each of the articles contained in this book.

*Osman Bakar* in his keynote speech titled, *Science and Technology for Mankind's Benefit: Islamic Theories and Practices – Past, Present and Future* (Chap. 3), addressed the overarching theme of the Conference, namely, the role of Islam in ensuring that S&T is applied for humanity's benefit. Bakar pointed out that S&T are necessarily value-laden since mankind is guided by values, religious or otherwise, in pursuing development and progress. In comparing Islamic and Western civilisations, he highlighted the character of Islam that it has promoted the core Qur'anic value of *wasatīyyah* (moderation) to produce a balanced civilisation and that S&T development in Muslim lands has been historically applied 'without transgressing the moral-ethical bounds' of Islam's Divine Law (the *Sharī'ah*), whereas Western civilisation may justifiably be characterised as imbalanced, ending in it ultimately displacing religion from the S&T domain altogether. The consequences are seen in the impacts on the well-being of mankind and the environment. An Islamic critique of the mainstream global thinking is 'very much needed' today. Bakar describes three types of ignorance – arrogant ignorance, preferable ignorance and innocent ignorance. Islam moderates extremes by shunning non-beneficial knowledge. He discusses the exemplary contributions of the early scholars, al-Farabi and al-Ghazzali, in assessing in terms of well-being the societal benefits of various S&Ts. The way forward, Bakar believes, is for Muslim scholars to critically compare these classical theories with contemporary ones on the benefits of S&T and to stress the application of *maqasid al-sharī'ah* and ethics in assessing the merits of contemporary technology. This proposal is taken up by Amana Raquib in Chap. 11. Bakar also suggests the pursuit by scholars and academics of a synthesis of the classical Islamic and modern views of scientific and technological progress.

The second keynote speech delivered by *M. Kamal Hassan*, titled *The Necessity of Studying Natural Sciences from the Qur'anic Worldview* (Chap. 4), complements Bakar's address. Hassan points out that the alarming aspects of modern science and its secular worldview resulting in ecological, economic and human crises have eroded public confidence in the natural sciences. As believing Muslims subscribing to the Tawhidic worldview based on the Oneness of God as enunciated by the Qur'an, it is high time for serious Muslim scholars, especially scientists, to undertake the much-needed paradigm shift through an inspired enlightened spiritual outlook integrating divine revelation and reason in the study of natural phenomena and their applications. Insightful western leaders and scholars – such as Richard Tanas, Bernard Rollin and Immanuel Wallerstein – have correctly identified many of the errors and deficiencies of modern science and the need for a theistic or metaphysical worldview, which is closely in line with informed Islamic critiques. The Qur'anic concept of knowledge places supreme value on knowing God, together with man's proper relationship with God as the highest goal. Hassan discusses the special merits of the 'people of sound intellects' (*Ūlū al-Albāb*) mentioned in the Qur'an and declares that Muslim scientists of the innovative and creative period of Islamic civilisation, as well as contemporary scholars – who have been inspired by the

Qur'anic worldview – are of this nature and represent ideal role models for today's scientists. A major obstacle to progress is human arrogance, and scientists today need to inculcate the spirit of humility in their endeavours as servants of Allah and His *khalifah* (vicegerent) on earth to understand nature and the universe in a holistic fashion as a necessary form of true worship of God.

## 1.1 Philosophy of Science, Cosmology and the Emergence of Biological Systems

*Alparslan Açıkgenç* in his *Philosophy of Science in Epistemological Perspective* (Chap. 5) has argued for the need to reformulate a philosophy of science from an Islamic perspective, which would comprehend all the epistemologically valid scientific approaches. Every science has its specific subject matter, method, theories and discoveries. The epistemologically characterised phenomena which unfold are called *scientific phenomena*, which lead to the emergence of specific sciences. The characteristics developed by a certain civilisation or community are termed its *scientific tradition*. Scientific phenomena comprise four integral factors: process in history, the human knowledge system, the emergent body of knowledge and the scientific community. Philosophy of science requires considering all of these. Of the four factors, two factors render science as universal and global, i.e. subject matter and the human knowledge system, while the other two render science as local, i.e. scientific process in history and the scientific community. Epistemology, sociology and history of science are all integral to a complete philosophy of science. *Açıkgenç* considers characteristics of an Islamic scientific tradition to be the following: (1) the Tawhidic moral and spiritual worldview as the epistemological ground in Muslim society, (2) the scientific conceptual scheme manifesting this worldview so that ideas developed will complement religious truth and (3) a specific scientific conceptual scheme comprising a network of concepts, facts and their conceptions in particular sciences, which are related to religious truths. When comparing science and Revelation, it is Revelation which is more authoritative. Such a science as the one developing from the Islamic scientific tradition will not lead to bewilderment but rather to a sense of wonder concerning the arts of the Creator. Consequently, Muslims need to correctly understand the nature of science and how it has developed in different civilisations if we aspire to scientific achievements. Science students in particular should have adequate knowledge of the history of Islamic science and its philosophical perspective.

*Mulyadhi Kartanegara* in his article, *Rumi on the Living Earth: A Sufi Perspective* (Chap. 6), discusses the views of classical scholars, especially Rumi and also Mulla Sadra, on the nature and development of the universe and all its elements. Like the Ikhwan al-Safa' before them, Rumi and Mulla Sadra considered the universe and its elements as living beings with intelligence. Rumi spoke of the role of love (*'ishq*) in God's creation of the universe that makes it alive and in the active attraction of

God's creatures towards Him and His Perfection as the fundamental force for evolutionary change. Kartanegara maintains that Sadra explained it in terms of a trans-substantial motion. This is in contrast to the narrow mechanistic theory of Charles Darwin that provides no role for the Supernatural. An interesting convergent theory in the West is the idea of a living earth proposed in the 1970s by James Lovelock. Known as the 'Gaia hypothesis', this idea posits the earth as a superorganism or self-regulating complex teleological system that facilitates conditions suitable for life. Rumi holds man in high esteem as the *microcosm* since it is for him that God created the universe. As the world is a living creature capable of loving and being loved, if man's internal condition is dark, the world will change from harmony and balance into disorder. 'Whatever man does will be reflected on the world'. Kartanegara argues, therefore, that as God's representative on earth (*khalīfat Allāh fi'l-arḍ*), it is man's duty to manage the earth responsibly.

In his article on *Sayyid Qutb's Understanding of the Universe as a Living and Meaningful World* (Chap. 7), İbrahim Özdemir discusses the contributions of the Egyptian ideologue of the Muslim Brotherhood, Sayyid Qutb, to the modern discourse on Islam, cosmology and ecology. Qutb's ideas studied by Özdemir are contained in his Qur'anic Commentary, *Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān (In the Shade of the Qur'an)*. Özdemir points out that although most of us often take nature for granted, Qutb on the other hand sees the universe as full of meaning for human beings and that 'it is not difficult for a keen reader of the Qur'an and the book of nature to see the same message in both'. Özdemir highlights in particular Qutb's commentary on the verse *al-Isra'* 17:44, which speaks of *tasbīḥ*, the glorification of God by all creatures, both animate and inanimate. Qutb sees in this verse a scriptural basis for affirming the idea of ecological consciousness in the most universal sense. Özdemir believes this commentary clearly indicates that Qutb was a pioneer of Muslim ecological thinking in modern times. Further, Özdemir highlighted Qutb's understanding that the whole of nature is Muslim by virtue of the fact that the universe 'works according to divine laws – the so-called natural laws – and according to the way God has designed and created it'.

Ahmad Badri Abdullah and Daud Abdul-Fattah Batchelor's article, titled *The New Approach in Western Science Towards Understanding the Nature of Life and Mind in Terrence Deacon's 'Incomplete Nature': An Analysis from Islamic Perspectives* (Chap. 8) registers major interest in an intriguing non-reductionist scholastic 'breakthrough' approach to the development of life forms on earth as proposed by a Western scientist. Deacon's most telling output suggested in his conclusions that life forms trend in a planned direction (teleodynamics) and, while not of a deist nature, is in harmony with the Islamic perspective that all creation is progressing according to God's overall predetermined Plan. Deacon elaborated on some partly new concepts – ententionals, constraints and absentials – as core elements, which emphasise the critical role of emergent processes in the emergence of living reproducing, sentient beings. He proposed that emergence involves three distinct steps of thermodynamics, morphodynamics and teleodynamics. Deacon's theory is discussed from the purview of the Qur'an, Sunnah and Muslim scholars, Jalaluddin Rumi, Mulla Sadra and Mohammed Iqbal. While Deacon argued against

Descartes-style dualism of body and mind, with which Badri and Batchelor agree, the latter would reinstate a dualism to emphasise that mankind are differentiated by possessing spirit (*rūh*) and high-level language, whose direct source is God Almighty.

## 1.2 Tawhidic Science: Principles

*Mehdi Golshani's* contribution, *Islam Can Give a Proper Orientation to Science and Technology Development* (Chap. 9), stresses that the Islamic worldview engenders a suitable comprehensive framework for scientific work and its applications. In enumerating five roles that religion can play in supporting scientific activity, Golshani finds considerable support for each role from the views of a number of leading Western scholars and scientists. Their views lend support to a revision of the current dominant reductionist scientific outlook towards acknowledging the existence of the Supreme-being.

*Adi Setia* in his contribution, *Vision in Action: Operationalising the Islamisation of Science & Technology* (Chap. 10), clarified that 'Synergy between Islam and S&T refers to the critical and creative integration of the latter into the ethico-intellectual framework of the worldview of Islam, leading to the holistic Islamisation of S&T rather than to the reductionist techno-scientisation of Islam'. Setia first provides a set of premises as a foundation on which Islamic-minded researchers/scholars can proceed on building a healthy Islamic science, which is truly beneficial for mankind. He then shows applications of these to various scientific disciplines. He raises an interesting novel question regarding creationary theory 'whether it could be infused with experiential content sufficient enough for it to be *re-expressed* as a physical, scientific theory amenable to rigorous systematic empirical inquiry' to then be on a par with Darwinian evolutionary theory. Setia suggests that Muslim scientists should not restrict the debate to just biological systems but expand it to become more holistic 'by formally generalising the [grand] design theory to all natural phenomena – biological or physical – i.e. to both biotic and abiotic systems'. To a degree, Terrence Deacon's 'Incomplete Nature' theory provides an intriguing base for such an investigation, as discussed by Badri and Batchelor in Chap. 8, and views of Muslim scholars, such as Mohamed Iqbal and Sayed al-Nursi, are also relevant.

*Amana Raquib* in her article, *Maqasid al-Sharī'ah: A Traditional Source for Ensuring Design and Development of Modern Technology for Humanity's Benefit* (Chap. 11), answers Osman Bakar's earlier call in attempting to translate the interrelations between the various *Sharī'ah* Objectives into a unified Islamic techno-ethical framework for a holistic understanding and development of technology that is both moral and practically feasible. Raquib has delineated important values such as establishing justice, compassion, brotherhood, self-restraint, moderation, balance, intellectual and spiritual development, moral rectitude and environmental conservation, which should be reinforced, while negative values – selfishness,

self-indulgence, extravagance, greed, purposelessness, transgression – should be thwarted. She believes that in this manner human interest (*maṣlahah*) can be served ‘by wisely, ethically and holistically crafted technologies that serve to liberate humankind from the current meaningless cycle of innovation, consumption and dissipation of technological goods and services’.

### 1.3 Tawhidic Science: General Applications

*Mohammad Hashim Kamali* in his exposition on *Islam and the Environment: an Examination of the Source Evidence* (Chap. 12) provides the Islamic epistemological foundations within the expansive environmental field. This field incorporates considerations of many disciplines of the natural sciences – meteorology, geology, biology and soil science – as well as the human sciences, social science and health sciences. The Qur’an arguably provides more guidance about nature and the earth, i.e. environmental ethics, than any other sacred scripture. Kamali identifies the main principles of responsibilities for man as the pinnacle of God’s creation – *khilāfah* (vicegerency), *amānah* (trust) and assignment to build and develop the earth (*i‘mār al-arḍ*) while maintaining a balanced (*wasāṭiyyah*) and clean (*ṭahārah*) environment. Man is duty-bound to avoid corruption (*fasād*), waste (*isrāf, tabdhīr*) and harm (*ḍarar*). Evidence of the existence of an environmental crisis is clear to see, especially the changes in climate and sea levels, loss of biodiversity and critical habitats, worsening environmental health and desertification. Countries, companies and individuals responsible for negative impacts should have to pay the costs of environmental restoration, while Muslim societies benefiting from divine guidance should be leaders in exemplifying good environmental practice.

*Daud Abdul-Fattah Batchelor* in his article *Reducing Wasteful Consumption Towards Sustainability by Waste Avoidance Using Self-Improvement (Tazkiyah) and Contentment (Qana‘ah) Approaches* (Chap. 13) provides a highly preferred approach for waste minimisation by encouraging consumers worldwide to develop their resilience to modern marketing messages by not purchasing unnecessary goods, thereby avoiding wasteful consumption. Such interventions are at the highest priority field of waste avoidance at the peak of the waste minimisation hierarchy. The key is to reduce wants to just needs through reflection and changing one’s mindset (*tafakkur*) and self-improvement (*tazkiyah al-naḥs*), which is also the direction towards achieving true contentment (*qana‘ah*) and well-being. This is easier said than done and requires an intense struggle with one’s soul (*naḥs*) and desires, by reducing love and attachment to material things, and to appreciate the spiritual nature (*rūḥ*) of our being. The benefits will be reflected in healthier people and a better balanced and sustainable living environment on earth.

*Ahmad Dimiyati’s* valuable contribution is titled, *Integrating Spirituality into Efforts for Improving Value Chains of Farm Products* (Chap. 14), which further confirms that integration of spiritual practices in workplaces enhances the development of attitudes and behaviours, which engender better technical and economic

performances in value chains of farm products in West and East Java, Indonesia. Heightened spirituality also generally enhanced the prosperity of the individuals concerned. This was well-demonstrated by surveys conducted on two Islamic boarding schools (*pondok-pondok pesantren*) affiliated with the Islamic organisation, *Nahdlatul Ulama* (NU), with associated agribusinesses and using *taṣawwuf*-based practices. Positive results were also shown by a tea-producing enterprise loosely affiliated with the *Muhammadiyah* organisation. The NU-affiliated enterprises exhibited a four-strand spiral of positive growth in spirituality synergistically resulting in social improvement, cultural advancement and economic prosperity. This report reflects just one segment of the widely observable general rise of Islamic consciousness (and its spreading benefits) within Indonesian Muslim society today.

*Muzaimi Mustapha, Nur Syairah Ab Rani, Mohamed Faruque Reza, Wan Nudri Daud and Muhammad Amiri Ab. Ghani* collaborated on research reported in *Neurotechnological Advances in Exploring Melodic Recitation of the Noble Qur'an: Uncovering the Neural Circuitry in the Human Brain* (Chap. 15). They compared the recognised phenomenon of 'Qur'anic chills' experienced by listeners to Qur'anic recitations with the widespread well-documented experience across cultures of 'musical chills' resulting from listening to inspirational musical passages. They reported research showing that the neural basis of musical chills involves brain circuitry 'similar to neuroimaging studies of highly rewarding and/or motivationally important stimuli'. Using the advanced electroencephalography and magnetoencephalography equipment available at Universiti Sains Malaysia, Kelantan, Malaysia, they are currently conducting research to try to identify neural associations with the 'chills' resulting from the rhythmic and melodic Qur'anic verses.

*Abdul Nasir Jaafar and Mohamed Ridza Wahiddin* announce a new theory in *A New Quantum Theory in Accordance with Islamic Science* (Chap. 16). This theory has been developed, they claim, from the application of principles of Islamic Science, specifically the pairing concept and the one-to-one correspondence principle, based on Qur'anic verses. Their scientific analysis posits that an electron can consist of both a unit electrical charge as well as a permanent magnet. The latter is considered a new concept and, together with the electrical charge, can possibly explain the zero point energy at almost 0 °K that is poorly understood. A derived mathematical equation for calculating an electron's potential energy is provided. The theory needs to be tested for veracity, but if correct it could have important benefits for humanity in a whole gamut of technological fields, including quantum biology, quantum computers and superconductivity.

## 1.4 Tawhidic Science: Bioethics

*Abdurrezak A. Hashi* in his article (Chap. 17) presents a comparative account of the bioethical discussions on the interaction between moral values and scientific discoveries in bioscience – on the relationship between *what can be done* and *what ought to be done* in determining an acceptable way forward. Three positions are reviewed:

those of: (i) pro-scientific bioethicists who believe that potential developments should be decided by the scientists, (ii) pro-ethical bioethicists who prioritise ethics over any bioscientific progress and (iii) pragmatic ‘rational’ bioethicists who place emphasis on finding a mainstream position through consensus. The latter preferred position may, however, need to be modified in the light of authoritative *fiqhi* interpretation of Islamic sources, or a *maqasid al-sharī‘ah* approach.

*Shaikh Mohd Saifuddeen Shaikh Mohd Salleh and Adeeba Kamarulzaman* report in *Implementation of an Islamic Approach to Harm Reduction Among Illicit Drug-Users in Malaysia* (Chap. 18) on the latter’s involvement in the initially controversial methadone maintenance therapy (MMT) and needle exchange programme for drug users in Malaysia, which was found ultimately to be highly successful and cost effective in averting approximately 12,000 new HIV infections. In a *ḍaruriyyah* situation where there is an overriding need, something that is forbidden in Islam (e.g. drug-taking) may under certain special circumstances be allowed. The MMT programme gained support from the government of Malaysia as it addresses the *maqasid al-sharī‘ah* higher objectives in helping to preserve faith, life, intellect, property and wealth, as well as the legal maxims of the Sharī‘ah in relation to harm reduction.

*Elmira Akhmetova* in her article *Genetically Modified Food and Humanity’s Well-being: An Islamic Perspective* (Chap. 19) gave a comprehensive overview of the subject. She presents a balanced and dispassionate view on the topic, which has seen considerable controversy. Elmira reviewed the benefits as well as the negative aspects of GMF and then provided a detailed assessment from both a Sharī‘ah legal perspective and an Islamic ethical viewpoint. She highlighted that genetic engineering has the potential to protect the world’s food supply and create food security. However, there are some serious concerns to be addressed, such as: (i) research showing numerous deformities in pigs fed with GMF, (ii) impacts on farmers in India causing thousands of suicides annually due to increased costs partly for pesticides and from GM crop failures, (iii) uncertainties on the long-term effects from entirely new organisms within the natural ecosystem and (iv) potential for the acquisition of exceptional power over people’s livelihoods by major corporations peddling GM crops. Muslim scholars (‘Ulama’) are currently divided over GMF whether it can be allowed, and further research is required to elucidate unknowns related to the product.

*Abdul Halim, Noor Naemah Abdul Rahman and Shaikh Mohd Saifuddeen Shaikh Mohd Salleh* provide in their article *Advances in Tri-Parent Baby Technology: The Bioethical Challenge for Muslims* (Chap. 20) an overview of the current status of this technology from an Islamic perspective. The critical aspect in the proposed biotechnological solution to genetic diseases, which impact on female fertility and newborn health, involves the utilisation of healthy mitochondria material from a nonparent female donor, which enters the genetic makeup of the newborn. The main issues concern the identity of the growing child and her/his relationship in Islamic law to the donor. Proposed research would address, firstly, how to handle the lack of certainty in diagnoses of defective mitochondrial DNA; secondly, assessing the overall benefit or harm resulting from TPBT to the concerned individuals and soci-

ety at large; and, thirdly, under the objectives (*maqāsid*) of Shari‘ah law, what are the relative merits in using TPBT to ensure protection of religion, life, and/or lineage and progeny. The proposed intervention techniques are new, so a timely determined research effort is required to guide the way forward.

## 1.5 Islamic Teaching of Science

*Nor Jannah Hassan* in the article *Integrating the Qur’anic Worldview with the Natural Sciences: Answering the Call for Islamic Secondary Schools* (Chap. 21) provides an overview of her efforts since 2011 under Kamal Hassan’s tutelage at the International Institute for Islamic Thought and Civilisation (ISTAC) Malaysia, in conducting the ground-breaking *Natural Sciences from the Worldview of the Qur’an* project. This is a determined effort in the path of ‘Islamising’ the teaching and learning of the natural sciences in Muslim secondary schools and has produced a number of fully integrated science textbooks. It builds on findings from surveys they conducted in Malaysia and elsewhere of teaching models (or lack thereof) that integrate Islamic revealed knowledge with knowledge acquired through reason. In the educational model she proposes, she emphasises on the *Ūlū al-Albāb* mentioned in the Qur’an – those whose hearts are imbued with high spiritual wisdom, as exemplars who successfully integrated understanding of the cosmic phenomena with a spirit and observance in full congruence with the Qur’anic Worldview. This is the prerequisite for re-emergence of a generation who will continue efforts for a much-needed societal reform (*tajdīd*) and renewal (*iṣlāḥ*), especially in higher Islamic education.

*Muhammad Mubarak Habib Mohamed* in his article *Teaching of Values in Science: Defining its Universal Values* (Chap. 22) suggests a new paradigm for the understanding of universal values in science. These values are believed to have their foundation in the natural world, which itself is part of the Tawhidic world order. Central to Habib Mohamed’s discussion of these values are the Quranic concepts of man as *khalīfat fī al-arḍ* (vicegerent of Allah on earth) and the Beautiful Names of God (*Asmā’ al-Ḥusnā*) as interpreted by Imam al-Ghazali. From these concepts may be derived the values of harmony and balance and of order and beauty, all of which are relevant to science and its teaching to students. The writer sees the importance of translating the value paradigm displayed in the world of nature into science educational curricula.

*Mohammad Hilmy Baihaqy bin Yussof* and *Osman Bakar* collaborated on the article *Positing a Spiritual Dimension for Science Education: Brunei Darussalam’s Experience* (Chap. 23). This is a further contribution to the current widespread attempts among Muslims to infuse the teaching of the natural sciences with Islamic spiritual guidance to provide for a holistic education based on *Tawḥīd*. Attention is drawn to early Muslim scientists who successfully pursued scientific and technological development within a spiritual and ethical framework by appealing to both revelation and reason and relying on arguments from both traditional Islamic



sources (*naqliy*) and intellectual (*'aqliy*) arguments. As a case study, the article examines the attempt made by Bruneian schools to introduce religious elements into their science education.

*Siti Patonah Mohamad, M.Y. Zulkifli Mohd. Yusoff and Duriyyah Sharifah Hasan Adli* present the results of their case study titled, *Displayed Features of a Student with High Functioning Autism during Qur'anic Learning* (Chap. 24). The study involved observations on the effect of using various materials to teach an 8-year-old autistic Muslim boy to read the Qur'an over a 1-month period. The findings suggest that selecting reading materials with preferred scripts and other features can enhance the learning process for autistic children, as evidenced by the subject becoming fluent in reading the *al-Fatihah* chapter.

## 1.6 History of Science in Islamic Civilisation

*Malik Badri* reveals in his article *Emotional Blasting Therapy: A Psychotherapeutic Technique Invented by Early Muslim Physicians* (Chap. 25) the existence of a therapeutic technique invented by ancient physicians that is being used today in a variety of ways. The technique causes a relatively sudden emotionally induced response from the patient to bring about relief, which demonstrates he believes, that 'any sudden dose of a high emotional response is beneficial in treating a neurotic disorder'. The technique was used for the first time by well-known physicians, Muhammad ibn Zakariya Razi (al-Razi) and Ibn Sina. Malik Badri further encourages students to search for other inventions by early Muslim scholars as a means of demonstrating the strong influence of Islam on advancements in many fields of scientific endeavour.

*Mohd Hafiz Safiai and Iknor Azli Ibrahim* provide the article *Tracing the History of Astrolabe Inventions Across Civilisations* (Chap. 26). The Astrolabe was one of the most used navigational instruments in the world for almost 1,500 years. Its history is an example of the process of invention of a valuable scientific instrument, which first embraced the idea of stereographic projections used by astronomer Hipparchus and then the initial technical concept arose with Ptolemy, subsequently to become fully developed and widely used with additional innovations and technical features incorporated by the Islamic Civilisation. Later efforts of knowledge-hungry European scholars and merchants facilitated its transfer, use and manufacture in western Europe – until further technological innovation by that civilisation led to it being superseded by development of the sextant in the early eighteenth century. This process mirrors the general birth, rise and flowering of a rich and diverse S&T culture in Muslim lands before its relative decline, followed by a succession of innovations in the West. This state need not however continue for long provided Muslim aspirants become re-inspired by the Qur'anic message and the desire to benefit their societies and the world in general with wonderful new discoveries and inventions as before.

## Chapter 2

# Opening Address by Former Prime Minister of Malaysia and Chairman, IAIS Malaysia

**Tun Abdullah bin Haji Ahmad Badawi**

*Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim*

*Assalamu'alaykum Warahmatullahi Wabarakhatuh*

Good morning to you all.

Professor Dr Mohammad Hashim Kamali, Founding CEO of IAIS, Distinguished Professors and Honoured Participants.

Firstly I would like to thank the Organisers for the invitation they have extended to me to be here today to open this Conference. The Conference organisation is an impressive alliance of seven institutions – the International Institute of Advanced Islamic Studies Malaysia, the Academy of Islamic Studies of Universiti Malaya, the Sultan Omar 'Ali Saifuddin Centre for Islamic Studies of Universiti Brunei Darussalam, the National Centre for Excellence in Islamic Studies Australia, Universiti Teknologi MARA and International Islamic University of Malaysia.

I understand there will be a presentation of some 37 papers covering a broad range of topics on the common theme, “Developing Synergies between Islam and Science & Technology for Mankind’s Benefit”. This is a very important theme of great significance for Malaysia and the Islamic world. It is most encouraging to see an overwhelming response in submission of Conference papers. It looks an ambitious programme and I hope it meets its desired objectives with great success.

We are examining in this conference firstly the epistemological aspects of the source and meaning of scientific knowledge and its metaphysical relationships with the Divine, the Spiritual and the Unseen. Another particularly strong conference focus will be to look into prospects towards practical applications from the nexus between religion and science and technology – for the benefit of the whole of mankind, not just for a narrow elite or for sectarian interests.

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I believe the application of a fresh Islamic spiritual approach will lead to new discoveries in science and technology for mankind's benefit. The Qur'anic foundation of *Tawhīd*, the last scripture revealed to mankind with its Unitarian outlook of benefit to humanity and its robust advocacy of knowledge and science, can inspire and guide us to better fulfil mankind's needs and solve many of our problems. This will be a tandem and collaborative effort between academicians and practitioners, between theory and practice, between vision and reality.

In this context, when I was Prime Minister of Malaysia in 2004, I emphasised on more than one occasion that initiatives to produce more Malaysian scientists capable of making new discoveries must be intensified.

I also believe teachers and researchers integrating scientific knowledge together with a Divinely motivated intention can inspire more of the Youth to embrace Islamic values and scientific knowledge together to help safeguard the world's environment and to build the Ummah as a beacon for mankind. The ummah should display the worthy objective of *ḥayāt ṭayyibah* – the Good life for mankind in this world as well as success and felicitation in the Hereafter.

Lastly, I am very pleased that all of you present here today can show the way and exemplify that there is a large body of students, researchers, teachers and practitioners who can be inspired by this vision too!

In developing Muslim scientists who can effectively integrate the two books of Allah – the *Kitāb at-Tadwīn* (representing the divine revelations of al-Qur'an) and the *Kitāb at-Takwīn* (the natural phenomena of the created Universe) – we also encourage western scientists to practise the Unitarian and inspirational messages of their religions for the benefit of mankind. In Britain, for example, from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, a majority of scientific developments came from practising Christians who believed they were developing what they called natural theology in better understanding and elucidating God's creation. Perhaps, surprisingly, Charles Darwin, a strong believer in evolution and natural selection of species, came out of this religious environment of scientific enquiry.

There is no doubt that human society in general has seen incredible improvements in living standards due to modern advances in science and technology, especially resulting from new medical technologies, and improved public health and higher education. Science and technology, however, if applied in a non-holistic manner by ignoring the health of our global environment, or when applied without assessment of its human impact, can drastically afflict human communities. We see this in global greenhouse warming, sea-level rise, detrimental coastal impacts and pollution that would most likely reduce environmental sustainability for future generations. Many regions of the world, especially Europe and Japan, have responded with improved greener technologies and strategies. Weapons of mass destruction have been created mainly in the West that do not discriminate between combatants and innocent civilians. Even conventional weapons were used indiscriminately recently in Gaza with great loss of innocent civilian life amongst the elderly, the women and children.

We must point out another issue that modern education in beneficial scientific knowledge has been opposed by Muslim extremists, notably in northern Nigeria

and Pakistan – partly because they believe modern science taught in a secular manner will draw people away from Islam. Clearly, we must ascertain and articulate the spiritual link with science and encourage scientific inquiry and research. Imam Abu Hamid Ghazali wrote at length that acquiring knowledge of medicine and mathematics, indeed all beneficial knowledge, is a *farḍ kifāyah* that requires a certain number of citizens to take up careers in such essential fields to serve mankind and advance the noble cause of bringing benefit to humanity.

Progress with deep insights can be attained through the *Tawhidic* approach, acknowledging God’s Unity and Omniscience. This approach engenders a holistic view of the universe and a holistic epistemology for its scientific study. Unity is the character of God’s Creation when it is traced back to its primal source. Allah tells us in the Noble Qur’an that “the heavens and earth were one and we split them apart” (*al-Anbiya* 21:30) and “O Mankind! Be obedient to your Lord Who created you from a single living being (*nafsin wāḥidah*) and created from it its mate, and from these two, He created numerous men and women” (*al-Nisa* 4:1).

It is my fervent hope that the pursuit of science and technology by Muslims will help bring teachers, researchers and practitioners together to strengthen the Ummah and your interactions with non-Muslims will demonstrate that we are enjoined to cooperate in the true spirit of *ta’āwun* in pursuing the common good of mankind. Unity is essential for progress on all fronts.

Another aspect to challenge about so-called modern science, as supported by the critical writings of British scientist, Rupert Sheldrake in his book *The Science Delusion*,<sup>1</sup> is the dominant view of Western science that everything is mechanical without spirit. For example, that birds are complex mechanisms rather than living organisms with their own needs and wishes in the ephemeral world; and people are machines with brains that are like genetically programmed computers. On the contrary, Allah says that the universe is alive singing the praises of God. In Surah *al-Nur*, 24:41, God states “Do you not see that it is Allah Whose praises all beings in the heavens and on earth do celebrate, (including) the birds with their wings outspread? Each one knows its own (mode of) prayer and praise”.

Ethnic harmony, cultural and religious underpinnings and a shared vision of its citizens provide a stable national base for Malaysia. However, the understanding of science and technology and the healthy commercial environment built upon it provide the critical source for expansion of economic opportunities for all Malaysians. We must keep in mind though that the health and productivity of the underlying natural environmental systems are essential for a sustainable future that we can bequeath to future generations.

There are also a number of big questions and issues in the field of religion and science, such as the topics of biological evolution, Intelligent design, the emergence of properties and complexity in the life sciences and Divine action – how does God act in this world and is scientific knowledge certain? We may have been timid to discuss some of these issues in the past, but in the pursuit of authoritative knowl-

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<sup>1</sup>Rupert Sheldrake, *The Science Delusion: Freeing the Spirit of Enquiry* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2012).

edge, we need to test, evaluate and uncover the Truth on these matters. And I sincerely believe God's Truth will set us free from ignorance and error.

On that note, I thank you and *bi idhni'Llāh* I declare the Conference now open.

*Wa bi'Llāhi'l-tawfīq wa'l-hidāyah, wa'l-salāmu 'alaykum wa rahmatu'Llah wa barakātuh*

# Chapter 3

## Science and Technology for Mankind's Benefit: Islamic Theories and Practices – Past, Present, and Future

Osman Bakar

**Abstract** Islam teaches the virtue of the progressive acquisition of new knowledge as the Qur'an calls upon man to constantly pray to his Lord for increase in knowledge. However, this teaching does not legitimise the pursuit and acquisition of just any kind of knowledge regardless of its ethical implications. The Prophet's well-known prayer seeking God's protection from knowledge that is useless serves to remind Muslims of the kind of knowledge that ought to be shunned for the sake of their wellbeing. According to Islamic ethics, each human virtue is attained through the moderation of two extremes. In the case of the virtue of pursuing new knowledge, it is attained as a result of moderating two extreme tendencies, namely, shunning acquiring new knowledge so as to remain in a state of ignorance and indulging actively in the pursuit of non-beneficial knowledge without any constraint. Thus, Islamic ethics of knowledge, by which the pursuit of science and technology (S&T) in Islam ought to be governed, seeks to liberate man from these two negative tendencies. The key idea discussed in this paper is the concept of beneficial knowledge with particular reference to S&T. In the history of Islamic thought, this idea is articulated primarily in the context of theories of cognitive psychology and *maqasid al-shari'ah* (higher purposes of the *Shari'ah*) that pertain essentially to individual and societal quests of knowledge, respectively. The Muslim pursuit of beneficial S&T is discussed in three historical contexts: first, when Muslims were the world's leading producers of S&T knowledge; second, in the period of decline when they no longer dictated the direction of science and third, in the possible 'history' of the future as may be gauged from present Muslim trends in the field. The paper concludes with some suggestions on how today's Muslims can help pave the way for the creation of a more enlightened scientific and technological culture in Muslim societies of the twenty-first century.

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Keynote address delivered at the International Conference on Developing Synergies between Islam and Science and Technology for Mankind's Benefit, coorganised by IAIS, Kuala Lumpur, and SOASCIS, Universiti Brunei Darussalam on 1–2 October 2014.

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### **3.1 Introduction: The Role of Science and Technology in Question**

An urgent issue of our times to be discussed here concerns the true meaning and purpose of the human pursuit of science and technology (S&T). The issue is urgent, because quite clearly misapplications and misuses of S&T have become rampant in the modern world and our contemporary human societies, regardless of their belief and political systems, so much so that S&T are increasingly perceived as instruments of human and environmental destruction rather than as sources or instruments of human welfare and environmental care. In the view of many people nowadays, especially their better-informed critics, S&T have lost their true purpose. Their dilemma, however, is that while they realise these misapplications and misuses of S&T could not be allowed to remain unchecked, given the kind of harm and destruction these have already brought to our human society, they also seem to be at a loss on how to help restore the rightful role and foundation of S&T. In these circumstances, whatever knowledge we might have on the subject needs to be shared and developed so that we could arrive at a better understanding of the kind of synergies between religion or culture and S&T, especially in the specific context of Islam and its culture and civilisation, which could guarantee real benefits to mankind.

### **3.2 Purposes and Benefits in Science and Technology as Value Oriented Activities**

The idea of purpose is, of course, very closely connected to the idea of benefits, since the main reason why a person makes the acquisition of something a purpose in his life is because he thinks it is beneficial not just to himself but also to others. However, with reference to S&T, the fact that there are many different answers to the question ‘what is the purpose of S&T?’ only goes to show that the ideas of purpose and benefits are essentially questions of values. When the pursuit of S&T is envisaged and realised at the level of society, what more at the level of civilisation, which is usually viewed as the most complex cultural organism possible, then we would be able to see clearly the prominent role of values in shaping and impacting on that pursuit. Consciously or otherwise, the creators of S&T are actually giving shapes and meanings to them in accordance with their value system, whatever these values may be.

Scientific and technological activities and products cannot be entirely value-free. These are necessarily value oriented, since they are created by man, and the psychology of human creation tells us that man does not create objects that are meaningful except with the view of manifesting his values to the objects in question. Man is by nature a value-oriented creature. He lives by values and strives to attain better and even better ones. The values by which he lives could be either religious and spiritual or secular and profane. In any case, he is guided by values in his actions and creations and inventions. Purpose and benefit and usefulness are therefore ideas

that are laden with values. Collective appreciation of the purposes and benefits of S&T tends to vary from one civilisation to another, notwithstanding certain commonalities that exist between them. In short, human understanding of the purposes and benefits of S&T, as is generally true in the case of other collective human inventions, is culturally influenced or determined. What is regarded as benefit of the greatest value in one culture may not be perceived as such in another culture or civilisation. Nowhere do we find this societal display of similarities and contrasts in the understanding of purposes and benefits of S&T more glaring than in the comparison between the traditional Islamic scientific and technological culture and the modern and postmodern Western scientific and technological culture.<sup>1</sup>

### 3.3 Relationship between Civilisational Identity and Scientific and Technological Culture: Islamic and Western Civilisations Compared

The similarities and contrasts between the scientific and technological cultures in Islamic and modern Western civilisations have largely to do with the fact that while these sister civilisations have distinct identities and characters, they also have a common religious and intellectual history. For the purpose of explaining what we mean by this statement, we will just take one major component of a civilisational identity, namely, its balanced or imbalanced character as the case might be, and apply it to both civilisations. We wish to assert categorically here that Islam is divinely ordained to be a balanced civilisation. Or, to give a description to it that would sound more Qur'anic, we say that it is the destiny of Islam to be 'a civilisation of the middle path' or 'a civilisation with a *wasatiyyah* character'. The Qur'an says: 'Thus We have made of you a community (*ummah*) justly balanced (*ummatan wasatan*) that you might be witnesses over the nations'.<sup>2</sup> Insofar as collective, societal, and civilisational lives are concerned, it is also possible to say that 'to be justly balanced' is equivalent in meaning to 'being in the middle path'. Not only in theory is Islam meant to be a balanced civilisation but in practice and in its historical development as well, Islamic civilisation more or less succeeded in maintaining a semblance of balance despite the enormous challenges it has to face from the more militarily powerful and technologically superior modern Western civilisation. There is something inherent in the very structure of Islam as a religion and as a way of life, both doctrinally and institutionally, that enables it to create and sustain such a

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<sup>1</sup>For detailed comparative discussions of the scientific and technological cultures in traditional Islamic and modern Western civilisations, see Nasr (1968) and Bakar (2008). In his critical preface to Nasr's *Science and Civilisation in Islam*, the noted American historian of science, Giorgio de Santillana provided corroboration of the contrasting spirits embodying the two scientific and technological cultures, similarities notwithstanding.

<sup>2</sup>*The Qur'an*, 2:143. For a detailed discussion in civilisational terms about *wasatiyyah*, see Bakar (2014a).



civilisation. We are referring, of course, to none other than *Tawhīd*<sup>3</sup> and *Sharī'ah*,<sup>4</sup> Islam's best gifts to humanity. In the past, this powerful pair of principles helped guarantee the holistic and balanced character of Islamic civilisation, including its scientific and technological culture which happened to be its major component and one of its finest achievements.

In contrast, Western civilisation may justifiably be characterised as a relatively imbalanced civilisation. Throughout its history in the past 1500 years, its civilisational pendulum has swung from one extreme end to the other. The imbalance could be observed in the various major sectors of its civilisational life, but it would be sufficient to cite just one example to illustrate this fact about Western civilisation. A good example is the observable imbalance in the domain of relationship between religion and science, which is of great importance to civilisation building in the field of S&T. During the period from the sixth to the fifteenth century CE, the so-called medieval period, religion marginalised science. However, in the subsequent period that spanned about five centuries from the seventeenth century till now, the so-called modern and postmodern period, science at first marginalised religion but subsequently even displaced it altogether from the scientific and technological domain. In the official creed of modern and postmodern science, there is no place for God and for things spiritual.

Islam and the West thus present two different historical accounts of the relationship between religion and science. This means that they also have two different histories of scientific and technological cultures to tell. More specifically, the two civilisations can tell us how their respective collective appreciations of the benefits of S&T have changed over the centuries. In the case of Western civilisation, with the kind and extent of civilisational pendulum swing it has gone through – from the medieval to the modern with all that these two temporal symbolisms imply – one cannot but expect it to have undergone a fundamental change in its perceptions of the role of S&T in human society and of their benefits to mankind. The change was nothing less than revolutionary. It is not surprising then that historians traditionally use the term the 'Scientific Revolution' in referring to historical changes in thought and belief and in social and institutional organisation that unfolded in Europe under the impact of science roughly between 1550 and 1700. The period in question began with the gaining in currency of the Copernican heliocentric view of the cosmos, which is itself often referred to as the 'Copernican Revolution' and ended with the popularisation of the Newtonian mechanical view of the universe.<sup>5</sup> The Scientific Revolution brought about further changes to Western society's appreciation of the

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<sup>3</sup> *Tawhīd* is understood here as referring to the absolute Principle of Divine Unity and Its applications to the various levels of cosmic reality of which It is the Source resulting thereby in the idea of unity of each of these cosmic levels as well as the corresponding unity of the science that studies it. Like all other domains of Islamic life and thought, Islamic S&T was essentially and thoroughly shaped by this understanding of *Tawhīd*.

<sup>4</sup> *Sharī'ah* refers to the all-embracing Sacred Law of Islam that serves as the source of organising principles of human activities, both individual and collective in all domains of life, including S&T.

<sup>5</sup> The heliocentric and mechanical views of the cosmos are attributed to Nicholas Copernicus (1473–1543) and Isaac Newton (1642–1727), respectively.

role and benefits of S&T culminating in viewing them in purely material terms. In contrast, during the medieval period to which the Scientific Revolution was a reaction, the powerful religious establishment as represented by the Church within Western Christendom subscribed to a theology that posited little benefits from the study of nature, meaning S&T. The then prevailing theological view was that man's knowledge of the natural world could not bring him closer to God and guarantee him spiritual salvation. Only knowledge of revealed religious scripture could do that, so the theological creed went, and not knowledge of nature, which it viewed as necessarily profane in contrast to the view of many classical Muslim scholars who referred to Nature as God's open book or the cosmic counterpart of the Qur'an. Interestingly, the earliest strand of intellectual criticism in the West against this particular aspect of the Church's theology was motivated by the Islamic idea of nature as a sacred book that serves as a counterpart to the revealed Qur'an but that had been depleted of its sacredness.

The modern period witnessed the simultaneous secularisation of nature, human mind, and S&T.<sup>6</sup> The secularisation process has reached its terminal point, which is none other than the extreme end of the West's civilisational pendulum swing. The products of this process, tangible or otherwise, have been globalised. Among these products are scientific and technological ideas and goods, including the idea of benefits of S&T itself. For more than a century now, the Western secular perspective has dominated global thinking on the role of S&T and the idea of its usefulness to humanity. As a result, the Muslim ummah finds itself pursuing S&T along the same line of thinking. For many contemporary Muslims, when it comes to issues of S&T, there is hardly any difference between their intellectual perspectives and the secular Western one. A contemporary Islamic critique of this mainstream global thinking on S&T is without doubt very much needed, and, in fact, it is long overdue.

In attempting to arrive at such a critique, it might be worth noting that traditional Islamic civilisation has a different history of relations between religion and science and a different history of scientific and technological cultures. Thanks to the principle of *Tawhīd*, which permeates Muslim life and thought both at individual and societal levels, Muslim scholars succeeded in harmonising the needs of religion with the needs of science. They were also able to approach and pursue S&T from a holistic perspective, giving due consideration to each kind of benefits and usefulness that may accrue from them, befitting the legitimate needs of man as a multidimensional creature, indeed as a microcosm as traditionally understood. And thanks to the *Sharī'ah*, God's last revealed law for mankind, Muslims were able to produce, use, and apply S&T without transgressing the moral-ethical bounds. In this connection, it might be pertinent to comment that it was not Islamic civilisation but rather the modern Western civilisation that created the atomic bomb and other weapons of mass destruction. In modern times, however, the impact of the modern technological system and culture on Muslim societies has been too great to allow them to chart an alternative technological development that would be more in conformity with the traditional Islamic scientific and technological values. In fact, these

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<sup>6</sup>For a detailed study of this simultaneous secularisation, see Bakar (2014b).

very values have either been lost from the *ummah*'s contemporary collective memory or considerably weakened, thereby necessitating their restoration and reformulation in our times. In these circumstances, one wonders whether it would be really possible to reform contemporary technological culture in the light of a new understanding of benefits and usefulness of S&T that is to be informed by Islamic ethics of knowledge.

### 3.4 Islam's Synergy with Science and Technology from a Tawhidic Epistemology and Balanced Civilisation of the Middle Path

For an enlightened discourse on the issue of synergy between Islam and S&T in the contemporary world, we need to be clear about its epistemological and civilisational contexts. Fortunately, at least in terms of ideas and concepts, we have both contexts rather well defined. The epistemological context of the synergy in question is none other than the Qur'anic and Prophetic vision of knowledge, which we have termed *tawhidic* epistemology. It is this vision that created and sustained Islam's knowledge culture, of which its scientific and technological culture was an integral part of great importance.<sup>7</sup> Some salient features of this vision will be discussed later. As for its civilisational context, it is conceptually provided by the Qur'anic idea of *ummatan wasa'atan*. For every civilisation, there is an *ummah* or community that acts and functions as its backbone and torchbearer. In the case of Islam, its civilisation is characterised as justly balanced by virtue of the fact that the dominant *ummah* that creates it is similarly characterised. This means that the justly balanced nature of the *ummah* is what guarantees a similar attribute to its scientific and technological culture. However, this raises the key question of what it takes to create such an *ummah*. In our view, the answer to this question is to be found in Islam's *tawhidic* epistemology, both theoretical and applied, which we likewise characterise as justly balanced. In the light of this view, the epistemological and civilisational contexts of the envisaged synergy present themselves as complementary and interconnected.

The justly balanced (*wasatiyyah*) character of Islamic epistemology is emphasised by the Qur'an itself. In Islam, by virtue of its nature as a religion of knowledge par excellence, the concepts of extremism and moderation are applicable to both human ideas and human actions. In the domain of epistemology, our interest in extremism and moderation pertains both to human ideas and visions of knowledge. How a civilisation addresses issues of moderation and extremism in epistemology could have a profound impact on the nature and character of its knowledge culture, particularly in the domain of S&T. From the human point of view, conceptualising visions of knowledge necessarily brings to the fore the contrasting ideas of ignorance and knowledge in their various forms. As a religion of knowledge, Islam more than adequately addresses this crucial issue in epistemology.

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<sup>7</sup> See Bakar (2014a) where this theme is discussed in several chapters.

### 3.5 Categories of Ignorance

In Islam, ignorance may be understood in three different senses. The first is what may be termed arrogant ignorance; the second, innocent or natural ignorance; and the third, selective or preferable ignorance. We will deal briefly with each of these types of ignorance and point out its relevance to our discussion of scientific and technological cultures.

*Arrogant ignorance* does not mean absolute poverty of every kind of knowledge. Rather, it refers to conscious or deliberate deprivation of certain species of knowledge, which Islam, however, considers as sacred in nature and thus endowed with the power to deliver salvation to human beings in their present societal as well as posthumous life. More precisely, arrogant ignorance means the mental state of not having knowledge of higher truths such as of the Ultimate Reality to which many religions refer as God, the spiritual world, and posthumous life that are beyond the reach of the empirical sciences and the pride of being in such a state. More importantly, people of arrogant ignorance seek to deny and oppose sacred knowledge. It is very well possible that the arrogantly ignorant command a good knowledge of physical realities and the worldly life with which they are able to create noteworthy scientific and technological cultures. As a matter of fact, quite often they do have it. Characteristic of such people is their taking pride in having this kind of knowledge alone in their possession, which they claim is the only real knowledge possible. They take the epistemological stand that all other kinds and forms of knowledge and truth claims are to be judged solely in the light of this empirical knowledge.

Arrogant ignorance is found in every age. The Qur'an describes the essence of this perennial ignorance in the following terms: 'They know but the outer (things) in the life of this world but of the end of things they are unmindful'.<sup>8</sup> When it comes to the real purpose of the universe, 'most men are ignorant'.<sup>9</sup> The pre-Islamic ignorance of the Meccan Arab society popularly known as *jāhiliyyah* certainly belongs to this category. Throughout his prophetic mission, the Prophet Muhammad (*peace be upon him*) had to confront the Arab *jāhiliyyah* in all its manifestations and overcome their challenges with the view of introducing a new social order on the basis of a spiritually enlightened epistemology. That the Arab *jāhiliyyah* was of the arrogant type was made clear by this verse of the Qur'an: 'And they say: 'When we are [dead and become] lost in the earth, shall we indeed be recreated anew?' Nay, but they deny the meeting with their Lord!'<sup>10</sup> This verse is about the political and intellectual leaders of Mecca blatantly denying higher truths and realities as believed by the Prophet and his followers. The display of arrogance was all the more glaring in their fierce opposition to the Prophet's mission. Another display of arrogant ignorance in human history as mentioned in the Qur'an was found among the followers of Prophet Moses (*on whom be peace*). The Qur'an refers to his prayer to God to

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<sup>8</sup> *The Qur'an*, 30:7.

<sup>9</sup> *The Qur'an*, 30:4; 30:6.

<sup>10</sup> *The Qur'an*, 32:10.

protect him from this type of ignorance: 'I seek refuge in God from being among the ignorant'.<sup>11</sup> His prayer was in response to the attitude of his people who treated as a jest God's command to them to sacrifice a heifer. Their attitude belies real ignorance of the spiritual dimension and the sacred nature of the act of sacrifice in question.

The prototype of arrogant ignorance is traceable to Iblis' refusal to bow down to Prophet Adam (*on whom be peace*) on the argument that the latter, perceived as a mere creature of clay, is inferior to him, who is a creature of fire, as mentioned in the Qur'an.<sup>12</sup> Iblis' argument was of course false, based as it was on Adam's outer appearances alone, since he has an inner reality that is far superior in quality to subtle fire.<sup>13</sup> Thus is Iblis consequently depicted in the Qur'an as both ignorant and arrogant!

In modern times, arrogant ignorance has been widely displayed throughout the world by many different groups of people who nonetheless have come to be acknowledged by the public as scholars, intellectuals, scientists, and experts. Together and over a period of time, these groups of people succeeded in creating the modern and contemporary intellectual culture that is completely desacralised. Central to this secular culture is the scientific and technological culture, which has been accepted, voluntarily or otherwise, as the norm for the whole world. We maintain that it is this Western originated and nurtured intellectual culture that best embodies the spirit of arrogant ignorance of our times. In all likelihood, its unchallenged prestige and influence is going to help guarantee its perpetuation for many more years to come. Today, through their S&T education at all levels, the Muslims themselves are helping to perpetuate this very culture. However, despite all this, the perennial truth about the higher purpose of S&T finds new advocates in our times, and, thanks to them, this truth gains currency not only among Muslims but also among members of other religious faiths. From the Qur'anic point of view, ignorance of the arrogant type is highly objectionable and indeed detestable! Prophet Muhammad (*pbuh*) fought against this kind of ignorance and the culture and institutions it generated and sustained in the name of a *jihad* for an enlightened God-centric human society and civilisation.

Contemporary scientific and technological culture is clearly imbalanced in its fundamental assumptions about the world of nature studied by science,<sup>14</sup> about the scientific mind that studies it,<sup>15</sup> and about S&T itself due to its embrace of and com-

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<sup>11</sup> *The Qur'an*, 2:67.

<sup>12</sup> *The Qur'an*, 7:11–13.

<sup>13</sup> *The Qur'an*, 15:26–33.

<sup>14</sup> The official worldview of contemporary science excludes non-physical and nonquantitative realities from the world of nature for the purpose of its scientific study, whereas traditional Islamic science sought to exhaust the whole of its multidimensional reality, both physical and non-physical. For detailed discussion of this issue, see Bakar (2014a), Chap. 3.

<sup>15</sup> Through a progressive reductionism of the reality of human consciousness in modern Western civilisational experience, the contemporary scientific mind has become reduced to reason that is nonetheless still a powerful and consequential human cognitive tool, endowed as it was with a miraculous discursive and analytical power. In contrast, the traditional Muslim scientific mind is wholesome in its character. It has not only discursive reason at its disposal but also the intellect,

mitment to the arrogant ignorance perspective. In more precise terms, this perspective affirms a commitment to exclusive empiricism and materialism as the two main pillars of the modern scientific and technological way of life negating the other dimensions of scientific and technological culture, particularly the spiritual and the ethical that are traditionally regarded as also indispensable to its health. However, such an imbalance would be contrary to the *wasatīyyah* character of the Muslim *ummah* conferred by the religion of Islam and in particular to the *wasatīyyah* character of Islamic scientific and technological culture. Muslims have an *ummatic* and civilisational duty to help restore balance and moderation to our contemporary scientific and technological culture to the best extent possible.

We now proceed to discuss the other two types of ignorance, namely, natural or innocent ignorance and selective or preferable ignorance. As in the case of arrogant ignorance, the Islamic understanding of these two types of ignorance also has major implications for Muslim cultivation of scientific and technological cultures. Both arrogant ignorance and preferable ignorance are not intrinsic to human nature, but rather they are culturally determined. The mental state or mindset associated with each of these two types of ignorance results from human choice, either individual or collective. However, unlike arrogant ignorance, which Islam always views as an intellectual sin and a spiritual vice, preferable ignorance is permissible and could even be desirable or praiseworthy depending on the circumstances and contexts.

As a concept, *preferable ignorance* has implications for the scope of moral and ethical responsibility of scientists and technologists. The crux of the concept is the belief that in certain situations, wisdom demands the passing of the judgement that 'to be in ignorance would be more preferable than to be in the know'. The ones usually known to have exercised this situational wisdom in their areas of expertise are those knowledgeable few who in the name of public interest chose not to reveal their piece of knowledge in question lest it would result in enormous harm to society. The potential harm we have in mind may be understood either physically or spiritually. In traditional Islam, the idea of preferable ignorance is closely related to the idea of distinction between elitist (*khawāss*) and public (common crowd) (*'awāmm*) knowledge as these terms are epistemologically understood and not in their sociopolitical sense. Among some modern Muslim scholars such as Nasr, the distinction in question is also understood and formulated with the use of the terms exoteric and esoteric knowledge. As a general rule, it is the elites in some fields of knowledge who would insist on keeping the general laymen ignorant of some aspects of knowledge that are in their possession. The rationale for the elites' preference for public ignorance in selective strategic issues is none other than maintenance of the public good or the public interest itself.

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which it recognises as a cognitive organ distinct from reason. The intellect is endowed with the cognitive power of intuition and synthesis, and the capacity to harmonise divinely revealed data and humanly acquired rational and empirical data. A Muslim scientific mind that is rooted in the Qur'an is also receptive to the idea of the spiritual heart (*qalb*) as the most fundamental human cognitive faculty to which all the other cognitive powers or organs are related. What is known in the Western tradition as cardiac knowledge as contrasted with cerebral knowledge flows from this very spiritual source. See Bakar (2008), Chap. 2.

Among the leading classical Muslim scholars who dealt with the issue of elitist knowledge were Ibn Sina and al-Ghazzali. Admittedly, this issue is a controversial one, especially in modern times when any form of elitist knowledge is viewed as contrary to the spirit of democratisation of knowledge. In some of his writings, particularly in *Ihyā' 'ulūm al-dīn* ('revivification of the sciences of religion'), al-Ghazzali speaks not only of elitist but also super elitist (*khawāss al-khawāss*) knowledge. Since the *Ihyā'* was meant for the general readership, he refrained from discussing in the book elitist knowledge pertaining to the spiritual path that he maintained could have the effect of disturbing the common believers' general understanding of religion. Ibn Sina also made a reference to 'science of the elite' but within the field of philosophy (Nasr 1963, p. 186). He claimed that one of his books, *Oriental Philosophy*, is about this elitist science: 'We have composed this book only for ourselves, that is, those who are like ourselves. As for the commoners who have to do with philosophy, we have provided in the *Kitab al-Shifa'* more than they need'.<sup>16</sup> A proper understanding of the idea of elitist knowledge as referred to by Ibn Sina and al-Ghazzali would help us to better appreciate the intellectual and moral stand taken by classical Muslim scientists in the face of new scientific discoveries that were ethically problematic in nature.

In the history of S&T, both in classical Islam and in the modern West, there are known cases where scientists faced the dilemma of having to make this moral choice arising from their discoveries of some powerful scientific ideas that appeared to be 'too ahead of their times' or that could result in totally unacceptable consequences, technological and otherwise. A good example from the history of S&T to illustrate the meaning of preferred ignorance pertains to the discovery of a heliocentric universe. In classical Islam well before the European Renaissance, a minority of its scientists seemed to be in the know about the astronomical fact that the planets revolve around the sun. However, for practical purposes such as in their astronomical works, these Muslim scientists preferred to continue using the geocentric model just like the practice of the rest of the astronomers. Their preference calls for explanation, whether it was dictated by scientific or non-scientific considerations or both. In this connection, the views of Seyyed Hossein Nasr, who is a leading historian of Islamic science, are of interest. According to him, it is certain that 'such astronomers as al-Biruni knew of the possibility of the motion of the earth around the sun, and even – as al-Biruni proposed, in his questions to Avicenna – the possibility of an elliptic rather than circular motion of the planets. But none of them did, nor could they, take the step to break with the traditional world view, as was to happen during the Renaissance in the West – because that would have meant not only a revolution in astronomy, but also an upheaval in the religious, philosophical and social domains'<sup>17</sup> (Nasr 1968, p. 174).

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<sup>16</sup>Ibn Sina. (1328/1910). *Manṭiq al-m(a)shriqiyyin* ('Oriental Logic'). Cairo: n.p.; quoted by Nasr (1963, p. 187).

<sup>17</sup>The elitist preference in classical Islamic science for public ignorance of the heliocentric system is not to be viewed simply as Islam's 'covering up the truth'. While Islam democratised knowledge and truths, Islam also believes in the ethics of knowledge in which the 'rights of truths' and public

While one may not agree with Nasr's explanation of why a heliocentric theory of planetary motions did not develop into a popular one in classical Islam despite all the technical possibilities, one could hardly dispute his assessment of the overall impact of the popularisation of the theory in the West on its belief and social systems and intellectual outlooks. From the perspective of the religious tradition – Christian and Muslim – Nasr's choice of the word 'upheaval' to depict the impact of the Copernican Revolution is most appropriate. The long-term impact of the theory was such that there was a progressive decline of religion with many members of the intelligentsia detaching themselves from formal religion and instead becoming increasingly inclined towards agnosticism and atheism as the theory became transformed into a popular argument against the truth of religion as such. It is a historical fact that in the West, the discovery of the heliocentric theory and its popularisation by scientists and intellectuals led to a major feud between the defenders of religion and of science in which the latter, in this case of the secular type, eventually prevailed over the former.

Another example, also from the history of S&T, is the discovery of atomic energy in nuclear physics that led to the invention of the atomic bomb. Two such bombs were dropped in Japan, one in Hiroshima and the other in Nagasaki. We now know the kind of destruction and havoc that nuclear weapons could wreak on human lives. Quite clearly, the first creators of the atomic bomb associated with the initially secretive Manhattan Project in the United States, especially Julius Robert Oppenheimer (d. 1967), the so-called 'father of the atomic bomb', faced the choice of whether to create or not to create the weapon. Fatefully for the world, in their collective exercise of freedom of choice, the nuclear scientists in question together with their political masters deliberately went ahead with its invention, thereby making our world a less safer place in which to live.

The two examples just discussed present us with two different historical instances of the application of ethics to S&T. In broad terms, both examples pertain to the interface of religion and S&T, but more specifically, they pertain to the interface of ethics and scientific and technological research. In Islamic scientific and technological culture, the interface in question may be viewed as an interrelationship between the *Sharī'ah* or Islamic Law, including its *maqāsid* ('higher purposes') and epistemology of research. However, the ethical issues in the two examples are not of the same nature. The ethical issue in the first example pertains to whether, in the

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interest are also to be respected. Classical Islamic astronomy was based on the Ptolemaic system which could be viewed as its 'exoteric' worldview with its own distinctive symbols inasmuch as it is the popularly accepted one. The heliocentric system on the other hand might be viewed as the 'esoteric' astronomical worldview. The Ikhwan al-Safa' showed that the heliocentric system also lends itself to a symbolic interpretation, albeit a different one, since no part of cosmic reality could exist without a symbolic meaning inasmuch as the whole cosmos is replete with symbols. Classical Muslim scientists did not make the first move to develop a heliocentric astronomical system at the expense of the Ptolemaic system nor did they forecast its future in Islamic science. Of course, now that the heliocentric system is popular knowledge, contemporary philosophers and scientists especially can help restore faith in God and religion by popularising the symbolic significance of heliocentric astronomy as explained by Ikhwan al-Safa'.



context of their time, it would have been wiser for such Muslim astronomers as al-Biruni to overthrow the Ptolemaic astronomical system which they themselves helped to develop and perfect and instal in its place the heliocentric model<sup>18</sup> or to remain content with it even if having to tolerate, in Nasr's words, 'a certain limitation in the physical domain' (Nasr 1968, p. 174). In other words, a more limited cosmos in the physical if not in the qualitative and symbolic sense was tolerable to these scientists as long as it was for the higher purpose of preserving 'the freedom of expansion and realisation in the spiritual domain'<sup>19</sup> (Nasr 1968, p. 174). The ethical issue was which choice would better protect the Islamic belief system and at the same time allow for the creation of new knowledge that would adequately address the legitimate individual and collective human needs in their earthly life. The prevailing collective wisdom in classical Islamic scientific and scholarly community was that the Ptolemaic system was the better choice. In the view of scholars like Nasr, the upheaval brought about by the Copernican Revolution in the religious, intellectual, and social domains proved right what earlier Muslim scientists and scholars foresaw if the walls of the closed traditional cosmos were to be broken.

The ethical issue in the second example pertains to technological innovation and invention. The deployment of atomic bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki went against the very crux of traditional Islamic war ethics. As such, an Islamic ethics of knowledge that is informed by the *maqasid al-sharī'ah* and its epistemology of research would not have sanctioned the Manhattan research on the development of the atomic bomb or similar research projects in Nazi Germany or for that matter anywhere else in the world. Imbued as it were with the spirit of arrogant ignorance earlier discussed, the mainstream modern scientific and technological culture could hardly be expected to be so concerned with the real ethical issues in S&T. If modern ethics could not prevent the invention of atomic or nuclear bomb, which is the most destructive to human life and the natural environment on the planet Earth, then how can we expect it to be scrupulously applied to cases of technological inventions with less destructive impacts? In our view, the development of S&T in the nuclear era is less and less dictated by ethical and moral considerations. This unfortunate situation poses a real challenge to Muslims and others who want to see scientific and technological practices that are in conformity with sound ethical values. Accordingly, issues of ethics of technology from the Islamic perspectives deserve our urgent attention.

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<sup>18</sup>Commenting on al-Biruni, first his neutrality on the contention between the geocentric and heliocentric theories until the end of his life and then finally his decision favouring the former theory mainly for physical reasons, Nasr writes: '... the choice between the two hypotheses was not one to be made by astronomy but something which depended on the one hand upon the cosmological and psychological questions which have a profound bearing upon human culture and on the other upon the science of physics' (Nasr 1963, p. 135).

<sup>19</sup>According to many religious authorities, including al-Ghazzali, the protection of religion (*al-dīn*) is the highest purpose (*maqāṣid*) of the *Sharī'ah*. The collective wisdom in classical Islam preferring the Ptolemaic system to the heliocentric model that prevailed from the times of Ikhwan al-Safa' and al-Biruni to the Ottoman period may be viewed as a consequence of applying this first *maqāṣid* to the S&T domain.

Finally, we would like to touch on *natural or innocent ignorance*. This kind of ignorance is an integral part of our human nature and our state of being in the sense that ever since we are conscious of ourselves as knowing creatures, we realise that despite our progressive increase in knowledge, there is always something that is not yet known but which we are curious and eager to know. But we also learn that there are things which we can never know completely. However, perceptions of our own state of ignorance are also always changing in relation to the changing state of its contrast, namely, the state of our knowledge.

Man is a sentient and knowing creature, meaning that he has been created to know. For this reason, he is always looking for more and more knowledge. Thus, knowledge is more fundamental than ignorance. The best proof of this statement is the fact that we are conscious of our own ignorance. We are not blamed or faulted for our natural original ignorance, since it is not of our own making. What we are blamed for is our failure to develop ourselves into true human beings that God expects us to be by using the very resources He has made available at our disposal such as our various kinds of cognitive faculties<sup>20</sup>, in other words, our failure to seek knowledge and to be educated.

The verse 'He [i.e. God] taught man that which he did not know'<sup>21</sup> in the first revelation that Prophet Muhammad (*pbuh*) received in Mecca is a clear reference to the natural ignorance under discussion. This ignorance is addressed through learning and education. Man's best teacher is God Himself. Thanks to God's teachings in various ways and through various means, particularly through His revealed Books to the Prophets and Messengers and His Book of Nature, we become His knowledgeable creatures. Prophet Muhammad's (*pbuh*) maiden revelation also makes it very clear that our reading, our study, and indeed our quest for knowledge in general should be in the Name of God. The first verse in this revelation commands us to read in the Name of God. To say 'In the Name of God' is to say in accordance with the Reality of God and on the basis of His knowledge of Himself and of His creation. Consequently, the pursuit of S&T should be done in the Name of God and not in any other name or in any other way. Accordingly, in Islam, S&T becomes a God-centric civilisational pursuit.

Like all other pursuits in Islam, the pursuit of knowledge in general and the pursuit of S&T in particular are portrayed as a balanced societal activity. Islam teaches the virtue of progressive acquisition of new knowledge as the Qur'an calls upon man to read in the Name of God and to constantly pray to his Lord for increase in knowledge. The Qur'an says: 'My Lord! Increase me in knowledge'.<sup>22</sup> However, this injunction does not legitimise the pursuit and acquisition of just any kind of knowledge regardless of its ethical implications. The Prophet often prayed to God seeking His protection from knowledge that is useless: 'I seek refuge in God from useless knowledge'.<sup>23</sup> This well-known prayer of his serves to remind Muslims of

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<sup>20</sup> *The Qur'an*, 32:9.

<sup>21</sup> *The Qur'an*, 96:5.

<sup>22</sup> *The Qur'an*, 20:114.

<sup>23</sup> Sahih Muslim, Hadith no. 6568.

the kind of knowledge that ought to be shunned for the sake of their individual and societal wellbeing.

According to Islamic ethics, each human virtue is attained through the moderation of two extremes. In the case of the virtue of pursuing new knowledge, it is attained as a result of moderating two extreme tendencies, namely, the tendency to shun acquiring new knowledge so as to remain in a state of blameworthy ignorance or static knowledge and the tendency to indulge in the pursuit of non-beneficial knowledge without any constraint. Thus, Islamic ethics of knowledge, by which the pursuit of S&T in Islam ought to be governed, seeks to liberate man individually and collectively from these two tendencies, both of which are viewed as negative.

### 3.6 Islamic Theories of Societal Roles and Benefits of S&T

In the history of Islamic thought, the idea and concept of beneficial knowledge has been discussed by many scholars from various intellectual perspectives. Some like al-Farabi and al-Ghazzali have also discussed this concept in relation to the intellectual sciences (*al-'ulūm al-'aqliyyah*), of which S&T are well-known parts. We have specifically mentioned here the names of al-Farabi and al-Ghazzali, because both of them are known to have given detailed treatments of the concepts of usefulness and benefits of S&T. Our book *Classification of Knowledge in Islam* (Bakar 1998) provides a detailed discussion of their theories of merits and demerits of the various sciences and technologies. Generally speaking, the idea of usefulness and benefits of knowledge and the sciences have been articulated primarily in the context of either theories of faculty psychology, especially its cognitive branch, or theories of *maqasid al-shar'ah* (higher purposes of the *Shar'ah*).

Theories of faculty psychology are most pertinent to the issue of the human quest for knowledge at the personal level.<sup>24</sup> The reason for this special pertinence is that such theories help us to understand the entire range of human needs at the personal level corresponding to the various faculties in the human constitution. These needs in turn throw light on the meaning of beneficial knowledge with respect to the individual human being. The fundamental data serving as the basis of these theories were provided by the Qur'an and the prophetic hadiths themselves. These include the spiritual organs referred to in the Qur'an as *rūh* ('spirit') and *qalb* or *fu'ād* ('heart') and the various faculties of the soul (*nafs*) comprising the sensitive, the imaginative, and the rational faculties. The cognitive organ '*aql*' ('intellect-reason') is not mentioned in the Qur'an but it is mentioned in the hadiths. However, the Qur'an often mentions its activities and functions thus implying its existence. These organs and faculties tell us that man's overall needs comprise the physical or material, the imaginative and emotive, the intellectual-rational, and the spiritual. S&T can help cater to these various needs of man. To the extent that S&T can help do so, they may be regarded as beneficial to man.

<sup>24</sup>For al-Farabi's detailed theory of cognitive psychology, see Bakar (1998), Chap. 2.

As for the theories of *maqasid al-sharī'ah*, they pertain essentially to societal quests for knowledge. It is most understandable why in Islam societal benefits of S&T are discussed within the framework of theories of *maqasid al-sharī'ah*. In Islam, societal activities are governed by the principles of the *Sharī'ah*. In all human civilisations, scientific and technological activities are considered as among the most important societal activities. It is the *Sharī'ah* that primarily shapes the role of S&T in Muslim societies both in their creative and regulative aspects. It is the higher purposes of the *Sharī'ah* that basically determine the nature and scope of societal benefits that may accrue from a civilisational pursuit of S&T.

It was mainly from the perspectives of the *Sharī'ah* that al-Ghazzali discussed the concept of usefulness and benefits of S&T. Inspired by the Prophet's reference to non-beneficial knowledge, al-Ghazzali undertook the task of categorising the sciences so as to distinguish it from the beneficial ones. He divided the sciences into the praiseworthy (*maḥmūd*), blameworthy (*madhmūm*), and permissible (*mubāḥ*) categories.<sup>25</sup> By praiseworthy sciences, he meant those that are 'indispensable for the welfare of this world' and 'the absence of which could reduce a community to serious difficulties'. He gave the examples of medicine and mathematics and other *farḍ kifāyah* sciences. He gave a lot of attention to the blameworthy sciences. He defines blameworthy knowledge in three different senses: first, when it leads to any harm whether to its practitioner or someone else; second, when it is mostly harmful; and third, when the pursuit of that kind of knowledge does not give the practitioner any real increase in beneficial knowledge. Quite clearly, if al-Ghazzali's theory of beneficial knowledge was to serve as one of the foundational elements of Muslim scientific and technological culture, then the resulting culture would be significantly different from the one we have seen in modern times.

Al-Farabi's treatment of the roles and benefits of S&T sounds very modern even though he wrote it in the tenth century. It is particularly interesting, since it is done within the framework of a comprehensive theory of human happiness, which subsumes an ethical theory of human virtues and vices and a theory of faculty psychology. One of the major themes dealt with by al-Farabi in his theory of happiness concerns the desired interrelationship between the *Sharī'ah* and technology that would help guarantee the attainment of happiness in human society. He argued that society needs both the *Sharī'ah* and technology for its wellbeing (Al-Farabi 1962, p. 13).<sup>26</sup> He proposed a marriage between the two in which each would serve the interests of the other. Technology would serve the *Sharī'ah* and its *maqāṣid*, thereby contributing to real human happiness, since it provides the material tools and occasions for the flourishing of moral goods, whereas the *Sharī'ah* and its *maqāṣid* would guide technology on its right, legitimate track to its real objectives and goals. Without technology, how can the *maqāṣid*, which embodies the ideals of *ummatan*

<sup>25</sup>For detailed discussion of these three categories of knowledge according to al-Ghazzali, see Bakar (1998), Chap. 9.

<sup>26</sup>Unlike al-Ghazzali, al-Farabi discussed the *Sharī'ah* from the perspective of political science under the subject of moral goods and moral-ethical values and technology under the subject of intellectual-rational goods and artistic values.

*wasāṭan*, be realised in society? And without the *Sharī‘ah*, how can technology by itself know what its true goals are? Almost anticipating Albert Einstein ten centuries earlier, al-Farabi seemed to be saying: ‘The *Sharī‘ah* without technology is lame; technology without the *Sharī‘ah* is blind!’

Al-Farabi and al-Ghazzali were discussing the issue of the usefulness and benefits of S&T when Muslims were the world’s leading producers of scientific and technological knowledge. As such, their perspectives and theories were also significantly influenced by the scientific and technological cultures of their times, which although faced with issues arising from their development and progress gave them the confidence that they would be able to resolve them in due course. Presently, the Muslim position is vastly different. Living mainly as consumers and borrowers even at the level of ideas and thoughts, Muslims are no longer in a position to dictate the direction of S&T as a societal and a national pursuit.

### **3.7 Towards an Authentic Contemporary Muslim Scientific and Technological Culture: Recommendations**

As mentioned earlier, current Muslim thinking on S&T is hardly different from that of the non-Muslims. No work has appeared in modern times till now on Islamic philosophy of technology that is both comprehensive and critical and that addresses the epistemological and moral-ethical issues posed by the contemporary technological system to the future of the ummah. Hopefully, a group of thinkers will soon emerge to help generate a new Muslim interest in the classical theories of usefulness and benefits of S&T, all of which were based on the Qur’an and hadiths, and compare them with the contemporary theories in a critical manner. The idea envisaged here is perhaps to develop a synthesis of traditional Islamic and modern and contemporary thoughts on S&T that could serve as a preparatory ground for the creation of a more enlightened scientific and technological culture in Muslim societies of the twenty-first century.

The following suggestions may help today’s Muslims realise the proposed synthesis:

1. National policies of Muslim majority countries on S&T should be in conformity with the Islamic philosophy of knowledge, value system, and ethics of knowledge; more than any other international Muslim organisation, the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) has an important role to play to ensure that such policies are well in place in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation’s (OIC) member countries.
2. Muslim universities, especially through their Faculties/Schools of Sciences and Engineering, should teach well-designed modules on Islamic critiques of contemporary scientific and technological cultures.

3. The teaching of Muslim contributions to human civilisation in the fields of S&T needs to be re-examined with the view of emphasising those aspects of their contributions that have lasting values to S&T.
4. Scholars of *maqasid al-sharī'ah* need to give greater attention to its application to contemporary technology with a more critical approach and treatment.

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## Chapter 4

# The Necessity of Studying the Natural Sciences from the Qur'anic Worldview

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**Abstract** Notwithstanding the outstanding contributions of modern sciences, particularly the natural, physical and medical sciences, to the material progress of human life, several Western scholars (Richard Tarnas (*The passion of the western mind: Understanding the ideas that have shaped our world view*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1993); Bernard E. Rollin (*Science and ethics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Rupert Sheldrake (*The science delusion: Freeing the spirit of enquiry*. London: Hodder & Stoughton Ltd, 2012)) have highlighted several alarming aspects of modern science, which cause grave concern. Public confidence in the sciences based on naturalistic, empiricist or agnostic presuppositions to provide holistic and sustainable solutions to the global ecological, economic and human crises has been seriously eroded. The way forward for these concerned Western thinkers is seen in the reunification of science and philosophy, science and ethics and science and spiritual worldviews. We believe that if scientists, technologists, technocrats and scientific organisations and institutions continue to view natural phenomena from naturalist, positivist, materialist, empiricist, modernist, agnostic or atheistic philosophical presuppositions – which are different branches of the secular worldview – then modern science will continue to contribute to the grave crises of modern civilisation. As Muslim Believers, we subscribe to the perspective of reality, nature and life based on the doctrine of *Tawhīd* (affirmation of the absolute oneness of God as the Creator, Sustainer and Sovereign of all that exists). Such a worldview is what the Noble Qur'an enunciates as the alternative to secular worldviews, and, therefore, it is high time that objective scientific minds and serious scholars, especially Muslim scientists and young science students, undertake the much needed paradigm shift in the study of natural phenomena. We believe that the real solution to the civilisational and planetary crises lies in re-establishing the *Tawhidic* conception of the Cosmos, Nature and Man as the metaphysical foundation of the natural sciences.

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## 4.1 Introduction

We believe that if scientists, technologists, technocrats and scientific organisations and institutions including universities were to view nature and the various natural phenomena from naturalist, positivist, materialist, empiricist, modernist, agnostic or atheistic philosophical presuppositions – which are different branches of the main trunk of the secular worldview in the world today – then modern science would continue to be one of the contributors to the grave crises of modern civilisation. Therefore, we support any effort by non-Muslim scientists or scholars to promote a theistic or metaphysical worldview of reality, nature and life which is based on the belief in a living and transcendent Creator and Master of all that exists.

The *Qur'anic worldview* can be defined as: The comprehensive and integrated conception of life, reality, existence, truth and falsehood, which was revealed by God Almighty in His Final Revelation, the Qur'an, as a framework of fundamental doctrines, beliefs, principles, values and norms, to serve as True Guidance (*hudā*) for all mankind towards achieving the objectives for which they were created. This Guidance is essential for all mankind to follow in order to live the life of submission (*Islam*) and conformity to the will of the Living Creator, Master, Sustainer, Ruler and Judge of mankind.

## 4.2 Fundamental Rationale from the Qur'an

### 4.2.1 *The Qur'an Projects the Creed of Tawḥīd as the Foundation of a Comprehensive and Holistic Worldview*

The foundation of this worldview is conviction in the greatest Truth, namely, the existence of the One True God, Allah the Most Gracious, Most Merciful. This fundamental conviction is known in Islam as the creed (*‘aqīdah*) of *Tawḥīd*, which literally means ‘affirmation of the Absolute Oneness of God’. With this creed the Muslim accepts Allah not just as the only Creator or the First Cause or the Prime Mover or the Supreme Being but also as the *only* Object of Worship, Master, Sustainer, Protector, Provider, Ruler, Judge and Ultimate Source of knowledge, wisdom and values, for all human beings and all that exists. The essence of this absolutely monotheistic worldview is to be found in the brief Islamic testimony of faith (*kalimat al-shahādah*) that ‘There is no object of worship whatsoever other than the One True God, Allah, and that Muhammad is the [final] Messenger of Allah’. The doctrine of *Tawḥīd* – in its comprehensive meaning and scope – makes it necessary that all worldly acts or activities of human beings should not be against the faith in God and all that it entails and constant mindfulness of His presence because He is constantly watching, controlling and sustaining all affairs.



### 4.2.2 *The Qur'an Necessitates that Tawhīd Be the Metaphysical Foundation for Studying Nature and for Constructing the Islamic Philosophy of Science*

What makes Islam unique and different from other religions, ideologies or worldviews is, first and foremost, its creed of absolute, pure and uncompromising monotheism.<sup>1</sup> The denial or rejection of this conception of God is unbelief (*kufr*), and any religious belief or philosophy that contradicts this creed – polytheism, deism, Trinitarianism, pantheism, humanism, anthropomorphism, animism, Shamanism, ancestor worship, saint worship or excessive veneration of dead or living human beings believed to possess divine powers – is regarded as *bātil* (falsehood), *kufr* (disbelief) or *shirk* (polytheism). Similarly the worldviews or presuppositions in Western philosophies of science, such as atheism, naturalism, scientism, physicalism, materialism, empiricism, agnosticism, positivism, secular humanism, rationalism, scepticism, existentialism and postmodernism, are all considered forms of falsehood.

In the Qur'anic cosmology, reality and the realm of existence (*'ālam, wujūd*) consist of two interrelated dimensions, the first being the *'ālam al-ghaib* (the Unseen world), the realm of reality and existence that is immaterial and cannot be perceived by the senses in this earthly existence and is beyond the reach of human perception, such as the essence of God, the realm of Divine Command, Control and Decree, the Preserved Primordial Word of God, Revelation, Divine Creation, Divine Intervention, Divine Punishment, Divine Miracles, the Soul, the Spiritual realm, the Hereafter, the Last Hour, the Judgement Day, Resurrection of body and soul, Eternity, the Angelic realm, the realm of unseen beings and the reality of Death. Everything else other than Him, His attributes and His acts, in this realm of *al-Ghaib*, is brought into existence by His will, power and creation. It is from this realm of *al-Ghaib* that God, as the Absolute Truth and Reality (*Al-Ḥaqq*), the Creator (*Al-Khāliq*), the Sustainer (*Al-Rabb*), the Ruler (*Al-Malik*) and the Most Compassionate (*Al-Rahmān*), governs the whole Cosmos and all that exists, all by His power, wisdom and laws.

The second realm of existence is that of *'ālam al-shahādah* (the world that can be seen or witnessed). It refers to the material or physical Cosmos, the universe, the world, nature, human beings, things or realities which were created by Him and can be perceived by the senses and analysed by human reason, experimentation and logic. It is this created realm of the Cosmos that is studied and analysed by modern natural, empirical and mathematical sciences. We need to recognise that, in studying nature, the modern secularist sciences ignore – if not deny implicitly – the Single Real Creator and Sustainer of the universe, nature and mankind. Instead they appear to enthrone nature as the creative Power and Energy behind all that exists.

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<sup>1</sup>For a comprehensive intellectual exposition in English of *Tawhīd* and its implications in all aspects of human life and society, see al Faruqi (1982).

Thus, nature is being studied, analysed and understood only as a purely physical phenomenon governed by ‘the laws of nature’, without any connection with the Creator. This is, from the Qur’anic worldview, the greatest intellectual crime and injustice (*zulm*) committed by the modern secular mind. Muslim scientists cannot be involved in this injustice.

### ***4.2.3 Essential Knowledge regarding Reality, Truth and Falsehood, and True Purpose and Meaning of Human Existence Is Revealed by al-Qur’an***

The Qur’anic worldview as represented in the life and teachings of the Prophet (*peace be upon him*) offers the right Guidance, values and norms for mankind to gain ultimate success (*al-falāḥ*) and happiness and to avoid ultimate loss (*al-khusrān*), failure and terrible suffering in the Eternal Abode of the Hereafter. It is the Right Guidance for human beings to follow and He expects all His servants to obey Him.<sup>2</sup> This comprehensive Guidance in the Qur’an and the Sunnah is the product of God’s wisdom, not the result of faulty human philosophical thinking or secular reasoning.

### ***4.2.4 That the Whole Cosmos or Universe and Nature Were Created by God Is Affirmed by al-Qur’an***

A thorough reading of the Qur’an will not fail to impress that one of the most important messages of God’s final revelation is that this vast universe (or universes if there are multiple ones) with billions of galaxies, the amazing natural phenomena, the world and its diverse flora and fauna and human beings are the creation of the One Omnipotent Creator<sup>3</sup> and not the result of blind forces or accidents of nature as is believed by agnostics and atheists. It is from the strong influence of antitheistic worldviews that mainstream scientific thinking in the world today is still denying belief in Divine creation of the universe.

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<sup>2</sup>Q. 2:38, 16:89, 20:47, 123.

<sup>3</sup>Q. 43:9.

#### ***4.2.5 A New Revolutionary Spirit of Inquiry for Man's Rational Quest for Knowledge and Wisdom Was Introduced by al-Qur'an***

To facilitate understanding and appreciation of this aspect of the Qur'an, Muhammad Asad (1900–1992), a well-known European scholar of Islam, in his translation and commentary stressed that the Qur'an's insistence on the necessity of acquiring knowledge has:

engendered among its followers a spirit of intellectual curiosity and independent inquiry, ultimately resulting in that splendid era of learning and scientific research which distinguished the world of Islam at the height of its cultural vigour; and the culture thus fostered by the Qur'an penetrated in countless ways and by-ways into the mind of medieval Europe and gave rise to that revival of Western culture which we call the Renaissance, and thus became in the course of time largely responsible for the birth of what is described as the "age of science": the age in which we are now living. (Asad 1980, p. xv)

A tremendous cultural and intellectual transformation in the history of human civilisation was brought about in early Muslim societies by the Qur'an. It supplied a new basis for the early Muslims' efforts in constructing a new civilisation. Muhammad Asad provided a remarkable observation on this theme:

[N]ever has any book – not excluding the Bible – been read by so many with a comparable intensity and veneration; and never has any other book supplied to so many, and over so long a span of time, a similarly comprehensive answer to the question, "How shall I behave in order to achieve the good life in this world and happiness in the life to come?" However, often individual Muslims may have misread this answer, and however far many of them may have departed from the spirit of its message, the fact remains that to all who believed and believe in it, the Qur'an represents the ultimate manifestation of God's grace to man, the ultimate wisdom, and the ultimate beauty of expression: in short, the true Word of God. (Asad 1980, p. xvi)

#### ***4.2.6 The Holistic Qur'anic Epistemology Integrates Reason with Divine Revelation***

The supreme authority of Divine Revelation as the highest source of knowledge was earlier emphasised. The concept of knowledge (or science, since *al-'ilm* means both knowledge and science) in the Qur'an places the supreme value of knowing God (*ma'rifat Allah*) as the highest goal for all human beings. This, together with the knowledge of man's proper relationship (*al-dīn*) with God, is the highest knowledge

and science in the hierarchy of knowledge in the Qur'anic worldview. The knowledge and science of life in the world (*al-dunyā*) is another category of knowledge, but it is not to be separated or divorced from the knowledge of *al-dīn* (the holistic Islamic life transaction). It is for this reason that Muslim scholars conceived of two major categories of knowledge and science: the first called 'revealed (or transmitted, *naqliy*) knowledge', which is of perennial value, and the second 'acquired (or intellectual, *aqliy*) knowledge' which is of temporal value.<sup>4</sup> Classical Muslim theologians, the most prominent being al-Imam al-Ghazali (1058–1111), have classified the first category of knowledge and science as 'obligatory for the individual' (*farḍ 'ayn*) for all Muslims. The second category, which should not be separated from the first category, is considered 'obligatory on the community as a whole' (*farḍ kifāyah*). The Qur'an cautions emphatically against the influence of unsound speculation or conjecture (*ẓann*) in human thought, the corruption of human reason by negative emotions or ideas and the attitude of man's self-sufficiency and intellectual arrogance (*takabbur*). It reminds human beings that, without the illumination and guidance of Divine Revelation, the most that human reason can know is merely the outer form of worldly life *ya'lamūna zāhiran min al-hayāt al-dunyā*.<sup>5</sup> Even so, the knowledge that God has given to human beings 'is only a little.'<sup>6</sup> Thus, the abundance of scientific knowledge, creativity and astounding technological innovations today should not lead intelligent people, including scientists such as the well-known theoretical physicists Stephen Hawking (author of *A Brief History of Time* [1988] and *The Grand Design* [2010]) and Michio Kaku (*Physics of the Future* [2011]) to think or assume that secular science, without the help of God's religion or sound philosophy, has the capability to answer all questions about the origin and nature of the universe.

#### 4.2.6.1 The Characteristics of 'People Who Possess Sound Intellects' (*Ūlū al-Albāb*)<sup>7</sup>

True scholars and people of knowledge in the Qur'anic worldview are the most humble and conscious of their dependence upon the supreme power, and the profound knowledge of the Creator of the Cosmos. Their personality represents the product of the unification of true faith (*īmān*), knowledge (*ilm*), righteous action (*'amal ṣāliḥ*) and high moral standards (*akhlāq karīma*). Thus, the scholars are

<sup>4</sup>Refer to the historic First World Conference on Muslim Education held in Makkah al-Mukarramah in 1977 in the *Conference Book* and the *Recommendations* (Jeddah: King Abdul Aziz University, 1977).

<sup>5</sup>Q. 30:7.

<sup>6</sup>Q. 17: 85.

<sup>7</sup>To understand the full meaning and the attitude of the *Ūlū al-Albāb*, one needs to refer to classical and modern Arabic commentaries of Q. 3:190–194.

described by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) who was the blessed recipient of Divine Knowledge and the embodiment of Divine Wisdom (*ḥikmah*), as 'the inheritors of the Prophets'.

The Qur'anic message also makes it clear that the intellects of God-fearing scholars derive their knowledge of God and of His power, wisdom and mercy not only from one source, i.e. God's written book, but from two sources, the other being the unwritten and observable 'Book' of the Cosmos and the world of nature. In several places the Qur'an urges 'people who use their reason' to study and contemplate on the multitude of God's creation in nature and on their usefulness and indispensability for the physical sustenance and wellbeing of human life. The result of such study and contemplative thinking (*tafakkur*) should be manifested then in their gratitude to their Lord and Sustainer.

#### 4.2.6.2 True Scholars and Their Special Characteristics

The people of knowledge, or scholars, are also the *Ūlū al-Albāb* in that they use their reason and intelligence in the way that God had intended they be used. From the Qur'anic worldview, Muslim scholars of natural science then should not be evaluated purely on their specialisation fields – religious or worldly – but also on the quality of the 'profound awe and fear of Allah' arising from their ability to understand that natural phenomena are evidences of the presence, knowledge, design and power of the Creator and Sustainer of the Cosmos. Thus, the term *al-'ulama'* in the Qur'an (*Fatir* 35:28) can be interpreted to mean 'scholars who know how to 'read' the natural phenomena deeply; they are the ones who truly fear the wrath of Allah' (Qutb 1981, p. 698), because the complexities, intricacies and systematic order in the Cosmos could only be comprehended by those who are truly knowledgeable of this Book of Nature.

The useful knowledge and technologies to be derived from the scientific study of nature is essential for God's servants and vicegerents to play their constructive civilisational role as required by Islam. But in order to understand the purpose, function and metaphysical meaning of the natural phenomena, they need the illumination and guidance of the Qur'an. Thus, the most desirable form of Muslim education is one that combines the 'readings of the two Books' in a truly integrated and balanced manner.

The Muslim scientists – physicists, astronomers, engineers, architects, medical doctors, chemists and mathematicians – of the glorious period of Islamic civilisation were well known for their discoveries of the secrets of nature and the human body, but unlike the secular-minded scientists or social scientists of the modern era, they were Believers who were inspired by the Qur'anic worldview. These great scholars integrated *Tawhidic* values and norms into their lives and intellectual works. Many of them could be considered as the embodiments of the integrated model of the *Ūlū al-Albāb* and the '*Ulama'* as propagated by the Qur'an.

#### **4.2.7 *The Qur'an Presents a Cosmology, Which Elucidates that: (1) The Cosmos, Universe, Nature and Man Belong to God; (2) The Whole of Nature 'Submits' to the Will of God and They All 'Declare His Glory and Celebrate His Praise'; and (3) They Contain and Manifest His 'Signs' in Many Different Ways and Forms***

The whole of creation belongs to God,<sup>8</sup> submits to Him,<sup>9</sup> proclaims His glory and celebrates His praise.<sup>10</sup> Further, the whole of creation, including aspects of inherent human nature, good social behaviour and human instincts, and the rise and fall of nations in history manifest the 'Āyāt (Signs, Evidences, Proofs, Verses and Lessons) of God Almighty. These Signs proclaim and point to God's existence, oneness, omnipresence, omnipotence, omniscience, wisdom, goodness and compassion. The Qur'an reveals that God's Signs are present in the universe and in man's own nature as one of the ways by which mankind will know and realise the truth about God Almighty:

Soon We will show them Our Signs in the horizons and within their own selves until it becomes clear to them that this is the Truth. But is it not sufficient concerning your Lord that He is a Witness, over all things? (*Fussilat* 41: 53)

#### **4.2.8 *The Qur'an Obliges Mankind to Express Gratitude to God***

Gratitude is due to Him for (a) the divine gift of the intellect; (b) being given knowledge and wisdom; (c) being taught that the whole cosmos, nature and humans are manifestations of His 'signs', His goodness, and His 'bounties' (*ni'am*, sing. *ni'mah*); and (d) making all those bounties available and subservient to mankind. The principle of gratitude (*shukr*) to God Almighty is the correct relationship of servanthood (*'ubūdīyah*) of humans before their Compassionate Master and

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<sup>8</sup>Q. 3:189, 4:126, 131–132.

<sup>9</sup>Q. 3:83. In explaining this verse, Abul A'la Maududi said regarding the statement '*that all things in heavens and the earth, willingly or unwillingly, submit to Allah*', this means 'When the whole universe and everything in it follow 'Islam' and submit to Allah, what other way of life than Islam do these rejectors, who live in the same universe, seek to follow?'

<sup>10</sup>Q. 17:44. In explaining this verse, Abdullah Yusuf Ali says: 'All Creation, animate and inanimate, sings Allah's praises and celebrates His glory, – animate, with consciousness, and inanimate, in the evidence which it furnishes of the unity and glory of Allah.' Human beings may not understand how nature praises Allah the Most Gracious, but they should, as intelligent beings, be doing the same thing as nature in submitting to His will, obeying Him and praising Him. *The Holy Qur'an*, note 2229, p. 789. See also Q. 24:41–42, 59:24, 62:1, 64:1, 13:13.

Sustainer.<sup>11</sup> It is the opposite of the attitude of *kufur* and intellectual arrogance that characterises the modern secular mind including the minds of agnostic and atheistic scientists. The modern secular civilisation represents, in many ways, the spirit of human ingratitude to his Master and Sustainer and the failure to recognise His 'Signs' or His 'Bounties' in nature.

A heavy price is now being paid for this unbecoming attitude in the various global crises besetting the world – environmental degradation, global warming, wars, violence and terrorism, economic and financial turmoil, political leadership corruption, moral decadence, cultural hedonism and the widening rift of social injustice between the privileged few and the deprived majority. If we contemplate on the generosity of God's care, bounty and concern for our material and spiritual wellbeing, in nature and in our lives, our minds and hearts should be overflowing with the feeling of obligation, first to praise our Master for His Greatness and Magnificence and second, to be grateful to Him. This gratitude is to be manifested by carrying out His commandments, enjoining what is good and right and prohibiting what is bad and wrong in line with the human identity as moral beings who are destined by God to detest immoral behaviour and oppose unethical conduct. For Muslim scientists, showing gratitude means that ethical values and perspectives must be integrated with their scientific research, consultancy and publications. In the morally declining civilisation in which we live today, it is a religious and professional responsibility of Muslim scientists to present themselves as good examples of ethical scientists, as a manifestation of their gratitude to the Supreme Master.

#### 4.2.9 *Major Qur'anic Principles Facilitate Studying and Understanding the Cosmos and Nature*

From the study of the Qur'anic verses regarding the natural phenomena, we are able to deduce major principles regarding the nature of the natural order.<sup>12</sup> The late Professor Ismai'il Raji al Faruqi (1986), in his famous book *The Cultural Atlas of Islam*, discussed five of these principles in a philosophical style<sup>13</sup>:

*Createdness* – Nature is created by the One True God.

*Temporality* – Nature is a temporal and mundane entity, not divine.

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<sup>11</sup> In Q. 76:3 we read, 'Verily, We have shown him the way: [and it rests with him] to be either grateful or ungrateful.' Allah the Most Gracious does not force human beings to be grateful, but He expects them to be grateful to Him for all the bounties – material or spiritual – that He has showered upon mankind. Yet many human beings choose to be ungrateful to Him because they have been deceived by their own egoism, intellectual capabilities and false notions of greatness and independence.

<sup>12</sup> This section is based on al-Faruqi and al-Faruqi (1986).

<sup>13</sup> We prefer, however, to use the term 'temporality' instead of 'profanity' in the original text to avoid any negative connotation in the meaning of profanity.

*Orderliness* – Nature is orderly, balanced and beautiful and functions according to the laws of the One True God.

*Purposiveness* – Nature has been created with a purpose by the One True God.

*Subservience* – Nature is created to be subservient and malleable to the needs of human beings.

#### ***4.2.10 Crucial Roles of Believers (Mu'minūn) in Constructing a Virtuous Civilisation***

In addition to elevating the status and role of scholars, the '*Ulama*' and the *Ūlū al-Albāb*, the Qur'an makes the Community (*ummah*) of Believers as one of the major crucial success elements in the Muslim struggle to establish the divinely ordained way of life and the holistic Islamic civilisation. In the Qur'anic worldview, it is the nature of Believers to give priority to God's guidance as revealed to the Messengers and culminating in the Final Revelation to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in understanding the meaning of life and in constructing the Islamic system, which ensures the proper growth and development of human personality, culture, community, state and civilisation.

#### ***4.2.11 Laws, Secrets and Benefits of Nature Are to Be Discovered and Utilised through Rational and Empirical Methods but Within the Framework of True Faith (Īmān), God-Mindfulness (Taqwā) and Absolute Monotheism (Tawhīd)***

The Qur'an enjoins repeatedly that all God's bounties should be observed, contemplated upon, analysed and utilised by mankind using the God-given senses, intellect, reason and empirical means. The holistic approach that the Qur'an enjoins, namely, the study of nature on the basis of faith in the One True God and the attitude of God consciousness is represented by the '*Ulama*' (God-fearing scholars) and the model of the *Ūlū al-Albāb* discussed above. The scientific, rational and empirical study of the natural phenomena is made possible because of the stability, regularity, orderliness, fixed causal relations and predictability that God Almighty has endowed in the physical universe.



### **4.3 Scientific Contributions of Islam to the European Renaissance and Relevance of the Islamic Conception of Nature to the Contemporary World According to Some Prominent Western Observers**

#### ***4.3.1 The Self-Critical and Thought-Provoking Analysis of Prince Charles***

Prince Charles (b. 1948) is heir apparent to Queen Elizabeth II. As an internationally renowned member of the British elite, his objective views about Islam and its civilisation are of great interest amongst world leaders and intellectuals. As an environmentalist and propagator of international humanitarianism, Prince Charles delivered two very important addresses at the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies, in 1993 and 2010. What he said about Islam and Islamic civilisation, and their relevance to our troubled world, deserves to be known worldwide as it is extremely rare for prominent Western leaders to have such knowledge and positive opinions about the West's debt to the scientific contributions of Islamic civilisation.

Muslim Spain, according to Prince Charles (1993), was not just the preserver of Greek learning and contributor to the emergence of the Renaissance; it offered its own original contributions in many fields of scientific knowledge which benefitted the Europeans. The Prince described how the intellectual and scientific prominence of Muslim Spain made Islamic culture 'part of Europe for so long' and concluded that 'Islam is part of our past and present, in all fields of human endeavor' and that 'it has helped to create modern Europe.' His admission that 'Islam can teach us a way of understanding and living in the world' because it still preserves 'an integral view of the universe', which unites religion and science, man and nature and mind and matter, is extremely assuring for Muslims. Not many Western leaders would be so humble and honest to make such a statement:

More than this, Islam can teach us today a way of understanding and living in the world which Christianity itself is poorer for having lost. At the heart of Islam is its preservation of an integral view of the Universe. Islam – like Buddhism and Hinduism – refuses to separate man and nature, religion and science, mind and matter, and has preserved a metaphysical and unified view of ourselves and the world around us.... (Prince Charles 1993)

The Prince then expressed a very critical view of the materialistic spirit and disintegrative tendency of the Western natural sciences: 'we study our world in order to manipulate and dominate it, turning harmony and beauty into disequilibrium and chaos'. The Prince reiterated the need for contemporary Western civilisation, which has lost a balanced perspective and spiritual vision of the world and has become more exploitative, to 'relearn from Islam' and to benefit from 'the ways of thought in Islam' in searching for the lost metaphysical dimension of life in Western societies. His second speech titled 'Islam and the Environment'(Prince Charles 2010)

was delivered at the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies in 2010. This speech is a profound critique of the secular and materialist worldview of the modern West which has caused the severe environmental crises in the world today. The negative consequences of the comprehensive industrialisation of life, in his view, are the result of the secular worldviews and mechanistic thinking, which are contrary to Islamic teachings.

### ***4.3.2 The Frank Observations of American Business Leader, Carly Fiorina***

Carly Fiorina (b. 1954), formerly American chief executive officer of Hewlett-Packard, was a prominent and highly influential business woman during her leadership of Lucent and Hewlett-Packard from 1999–2005. Important observations were made during her speech on ‘Technology, Business and Our Way of Life: What’s Next’ delivered on 26 September 2001. The first point she made is that Islamic civilisation was at one time ‘the greatest [civilisation] in the world.’ She then pointed out that Islamic civilisation was driven by the scientific and investigative spirit of innovativeness and creativity. Her last point emphasised the spirit of striving for knowledge and new ideas which was supported by enlightened leaders:

When other nations were afraid of ideas, this civilization thrived on them, and kept them alive. When censors threatened to wipe out knowledge from past civilizations, this civilization kept the knowledge alive, and passed it on to others. While modern Western civilization shares many of these traits, the civilization I’m talking about was the Islamic world from the year 800 to 1600, which included the Ottoman Empire and the courts of Baghdad, Damascus and Cairo, and enlightened rulers like Suleiman the Magnificent. (Fiorina 2001)<sup>14</sup>

### ***4.3.3 The Remarkable Objective Observations of Robert Briffault***

Robert Briffault (1876–1948) was trained as a surgeon but later turned to the study of social anthropology in which he became well known. His book was an eye-opener for the Western public whose understanding of Islam and its civilisation was based on misconceptions, distortions, untruths and prejudices. Robert Briffault was emphatic in making the point that modern European civilisation owes its genesis to the influence of Islamic culture which developed natural science and promoted the scientific spirit:

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<sup>14</sup>Compare this to the statement by Prince Charles that in the West ‘we have tended to ignore or erase its [Islamic civilisation] great relevance to our own history’. (H.R.H Prince of Wales 1993).

...It is highly probable that but for the Arabs modern European civilization would never have arisen at all; it is absolutely certain that but for them, it would not have assumed that character which has enabled it to transcend all previous phases of evolution. For although there is not a single aspect of European growth in which the decisive influence of Islamic culture is not traceable, nowhere is it so clear and momentous as in the genesis of that power which constitutes the paramount distinctive force of the modern world and the supreme source of its victory—natural science and the scientific spirit. (Briffault 1919, p. 190)

Even more startling is his assertion that European debt to the Arab culture was not just in scientific discoveries: the existence of European science was made possible by the (Islamic) Arab culture because the Arabs introduced a new method of investigation, ‘the method of experiment, observation, measurement, of the development of mathematics in a form unknown to the Greeks’.

The debt of our science to that of the Arabs does not consist in startling discoveries or revolutionary theories; science owes a great deal more to Arab culture, it owes its existence. The ancient world was, as we saw, pre-scientific. The astronomy and mathematics of the Greeks were a foreign importation never thoroughly acclimatized in Greek culture. The Greeks systematized, generalized and theorized, but the patient ways of investigation, the accumulation of positive knowledge, the minute methods of science, detailed and prolonged observation, experimental inquiry, were altogether alien to the Greek temperament..... What we call science arose in Europe as a result of a new spirit of inquiry, of new methods of investigation, of the method of experiment, observation, measurement, of the development of mathematics in a form unknown to the Greeks. That spirit and those methods were introduced into the European world by the Arabs. (Briffault 1919, p. 191)

Briffault explained that although Muslim scientists inherited Greek works, their methods were different from the Greeks. After describing the empirical works of Muslim scientists, Briffault called upon readers to ‘contrast that spirit of scientific minuteness and perseverance in observation with the speculative methods of the ancients [the Greeks] who scorned mere empiricism; with Aristotle who wrote on physics without performing a single experiment’ (Briffault 1919, p. 194). Briffault revealed that neither Roger Bacon (c. 1214–c. 1292) nor the later European scientists introduced the experimental method: ‘Roger Bacon was no more than one of the apostles of Muslim Science and Method to Christian Europe; and he never wearied of declaring that knowledge of Arabic and Arabic science was for his contemporaries the only way to true knowledge’ (Briffault 1919, pp. 200–201). Briffault declared that the practice of ascribing to Europeans the origins of scientific discoveries and inventions is ‘part of the colossal misunderstanding of the origins of European civilisation’ (Briffault 1919, p. 202). He concluded that ‘Science is the most momentous contribution of Arab civilization to the modern world...’<sup>15</sup> (Briffault 1919, p. 206).

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<sup>15</sup>In *The Hidden Debt to Islamic Civilisation*, al-Djazairi (2005) wrote: ‘From street lighting to soap, from trigonometry to algebra, from windmills to universities, from nutrition to surgery of the eye, from the paper industry to mass literacy, from the banker’s cheque to religious freedom, Western civilisation owes its emergence to its encounter with the Islamic world.’

### 4.3.4 *Eye-Opening Research Findings of Science Historian, George Sarton*

Professor George Sarton (1884–1956), a Belgian-American chemist and historian, is considered as a founder of the discipline of history of science. His most influential work was the *Introduction to the History of Science* (Sarton 1927–1931; 1950–1953). He, together with Robert Briffault, were amongst the earliest Western scholars in the twentieth century to highlight the contributions of Islamic civilisation to the Europeans. His works (Sarton 1953) are a major source of knowledge in the English language on the history of the great Muslim scientists.

## 4.4 The Rationale Resulting from Crises of Modern Science and the Environment

The environmental crisis is not an isolated crisis. It is connected with the larger issue of the materialistic and mechanistic spirit of secular modernity and progress, both of which have led to the emergence of what Richard Tarnas calls ‘the crisis of science’ in the contemporary world. As an American cultural historian and professor of philosophy and psychology, Tarnas (b. 1950) wrote *The Passion of the Western Mind: Understanding the Ideas That Have Shaped Our World View*.<sup>16</sup> He explained that rapid technological innovations of all kinds brought about unprecedented changes, many adversely impacting on the human environment:

The world in which man lived was becoming as impersonal as the cosmos of his science. With the pervasive anonymity, hollowness, and materialism of modern life, man’s capacity to retain his humanity in an environment determined by technology seemed increasingly in doubt. (Tarnas 1993, p. 363)

In addition to these humanistic problems, there appeared to be ‘more disturbingly concrete signs of science’s untoward consequences’ in the new phenomenon of the environmental crisis. Tarnas stressed that ‘under the West’s direction and impetus, modern man had burst forward and outward’, but it appears that modern man ‘had driven himself into a terrestrial nightmare and a spiritual wasteland [...] Nowhere was the problematic modern condition more precisely embodied than in the phenomenon of existentialism’ (Tarnas 1993, p. 389). A more serious concern with the ethics of science became inevitable. He explained:

The close association of scientific research with the political, military, and corporate establishments continued to belie science’s traditional self-image of detached purity. The very concept of “pure science” was now criticised by many as entirely illusory. The belief that the scientific mind had unique access to the truth of the world, that it could register nature like a perfect mirror reflecting an extra historical, universal objective reality, was seen not only as epistemologically naive, but also as serving, either consciously or unconsciously,

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<sup>16</sup> See Tarnas 1993, pp. 356–365.

specific political and economic agenda, often allowing vast resources and intelligence to be commandeered for programs of social and ecological domination. The aggressive exploitation of the natural environment, the proliferation of nuclear weaponry, the threat of global catastrophe—all pointed to an indictment of science, of human reason itself, now seemingly in thrall to man's own self-destructive irrationality. (Tarnas 1993, p. 365)<sup>17</sup>

It became clear to many perceptive and self-critical minds in the West that the present civilisation as a whole is in peril.<sup>18</sup> Tarnas concluded with a profound expression of disillusionment with the negative ethical and ecological consequences of the lack of moral compass in the scientific development and technological advancement of contemporary civilisation: 'The West was again losing its faith, this time not in religion but in science and in the autonomous human reason' (Tarnas 1993, p. 365):

Civilization itself was now brought into peril by virtue of its own genius. The same science that had dramatically lessened the hazards and burdens of human survival now presented to human survival its gravest menace: its culpability. The modern scientific mind found itself beleaguered on several fronts at once: by the epistemological critiques, by its own theoretical problems arising in a growing number of fields, by the increasingly urgent psychological necessity of integrating the modern outlook's human-world divide, and above all by its adverse consequences and intimate involvement in the planetary crisis.

Therefore, it is understandable that the Western scientific worldview has been subjected to fundamental questions, partly because 'that conceptual framework was evidently both creating and exacerbating problems for humanity on a global scale' (Tarnas 1993, p. 365). We agree with Tarnas' conclusion that, in spite of the great contributions and wonderful achievements of modern science, the knowledge that is derived from the limited perspectives – of materialism, empiricism or naturalism – can be very harmful to the environment and to human life as a whole. He said: 'Scientific knowledge was stupendously effective, but those [negative] effects suggested that much knowledge from a limited perspective could be a very dangerous thing'<sup>19</sup> (Tarnas 1993, p. 365).

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<sup>17</sup> Prince Charles expressed similar concerns about the materialistic, empiricist and secular Western worldviews in his 2010 address at Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies entitled 'Islam and the Environment': 'The empirical view of the world, which measures it and tests it, has become the only view to believe. A purely mechanistic approach to problems has somehow assumed a position of great authority and this has encouraged the widespread secularisation of society that we see today. I must say, I find this rather baffling. If this is so, why is it that their sense of the sacred has so little bearing on the way science is employed to exploit the natural world in so many damaging ways?'

<sup>18</sup> It should be noted that since the last two decades of the twentieth century until today, more and more critical views of concerned and thoughtful Western scholars, scientists and intellectuals have been published regarding pressing global issues and crises. A more ethically oriented and socially responsible international scientific community and tradition are urgently needed to prevent further misuse of scientific expertise.

<sup>19</sup> Western thinkers, such as Carolyn Merchant, Theodor Adorno and E. F. Schumacher suggested that the scientific revolution of the seventeenth century changed the focus of science from understanding nature to manipulating nature with power rather than wisdom. Together with the growing impact of secularism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the manipulative outlook suc-

#### 4.4.1 *Subjective Values and Natural Science*

Modern science is based upon metaphysical or philosophical presuppositions, such as materialism, physicalism, naturalism, positivism, empiricism, agnosticism or atheism. These assumptions may or may not be acknowledged or consciously adopted by some scientists.<sup>20</sup> Amongst the metaphysical assumptions that many secular scientists take for granted, which have led to the crisis of modern science and the environment are: (1) the universe is self-existent and operates on purely natural laws with no higher order controlling it; (2) human beings are the products of natural evolution with no transcendent purpose or meaning; (3) everything is essentially material or mechanical; (4) nature is purposeless and has no religious or metaphysical meaning; (5) evolution has no goal or direction; and (6) minds are inside the head and are nothing more than the activities of brains.<sup>21</sup>

Another important issue regarding the problem of modern science is the popular belief that natural science or the so-called exact or hard sciences are value-free.<sup>22</sup> However, since the latter part of the twentieth century, several Western philosophers, historians and sociologists of science have challenged this notion and the uncritical confidence in the scientific method (see Kuhn 1996).<sup>23</sup> They do not agree

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cumbed to pragmatism and utilitarianism. With religious or spiritual ethics removed, science and technology became submissive instruments of economic dominance of powerful nations over economically poor and technologically weak nations. In Oxford University's 'Islam and Science', Ibrahim Kalin (2014) analysed the critical views of Muslim scientists and scholars who have voiced their criticisms and concerns regarding the crisis of modern science. In India, the University of Aligarh group, under Zaki Kirmani's leadership, has also been concerned with secular and agnostic orientations of modern science. Muhammad Iqbal (1877–1938), the great Islamic poet philosopher of modern times, first expressed anxiety in the early 1930s that modern science, without being infused with spiritual and moral values, would become an instrument of destruction and oppression: 'This [scientific] knowledge yields physical powers which should be subservient to *deen* (i.e. Islam). If it is not subservient to *deen* then it is demonic, pure and simple... It is incumbent for Muslims to Islamize knowledge' (Ahmad 1962).

<sup>20</sup> See Butt (2003).

<sup>21</sup> The scientific worldview has been under serious scrutiny in the last few decades by scientists who do not subscribe to philosophical presuppositions of materialism or empiricism. But 'For more than two hundred years, materialists have promised that science will eventually explain everything in terms of physics and chemistry. Science will prove that living organisms are complex machines, minds are nothing but brain activity and nature is purposeless. Believers are sustained by the faith that scientific discoveries will justify their beliefs. The philosopher of science Karl Popper called this stance 'promissory notes for discoveries not yet made'. Despite all the achievements of science and technology, materialism is now facing a credibility crunch that was unimaginable in the twentieth century' Sheldrake (2012, p. 9). See also the works of renowned theoretical physicist, Lee Smolin (2014).

<sup>22</sup> See Kincaid et al. (2007).

<sup>23</sup> Since publication of the influential book, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962) by renowned American physicist and philosopher of science, Thomas S. Kuhn (1922–1996), the idea that scientific knowledge undergoes periodic 'paradigm shifts', has gained wide popularity. (The book has undergone subsequent publications in 1970, 1996 and 2012.) According to him 'scientific revolutions' have occurred in the history of science, and this has led to major shifts of the

with the assumption that the scientist's willingness to be objective implies the ability to be completely value-free.<sup>24</sup> Some scholars advocate a middle ground between the two opposite claims: (a) that values have no place in science and (b) that science is saturated with subjective values or is highly value laden (Doppelt 2007, p. 188). Although the popular claim that science is value-free is rejected by critical philosophers of science as being overstated and misleading, it does not mean that objectivity does not exist or is not attainable in science.<sup>25</sup>

It is useful to reflect on what Bernard E. Rollin commented about 'scientific ideology' and the notion of 'value-free' science.<sup>26</sup> The presence of strongly held beliefs ('hardened and unshakeable ideology') in the scientific community regarding the separation of science and ethics is he believed the root cause of the problem of the relationship between ethics and science in the West. The positivist and empiricist ideology (worldview in our view), which demands empirical verification of all meaningful claims, became 'the dominant way of knowing about the world in Western societies since the Renaissance'. Consequently, ethical judgements are seen as outside the scope of science. Rollin said: 'The slogan that I in fact learned in my science courses in the 1960s, and which has persisted to the present, is that 'science is value-free' in general, and 'ethics-free' in particular' (Rollin 2006, p. 17). In his analysis of the development of the modern scientific ideology, he concluded: 'the component of scientific ideology that affirms that science is value-free and ethics-free is incorrect. We can also see that the more fundamental claim – that science rests only on facts and includes only what is testable – is also badly wrong (Rollin 2006).'<sup>27</sup>

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dominant paradigm, which the scientific community decided is the acceptable framework for scientific work at that particular time. As every paradigm is constructed and defined by the consensus of scientists operating within a particular social and cultural context, the element of subjective social, cultural or ideological values in the production of scientific knowledge cannot be ruled out. Kuhn's analysis of the evolution of scientific views and the popularity of the phrase 'paradigm shift', especially in the social sciences, has made more scientists receptive to the need for paradigm changes. Therefore, our comprehension of science should not be based entirely on the belief that there is nothing but absolute 'objectivity' in natural or exact sciences; one must also be aware of, and allow for, subjective perspectives. We have to consider that objective conclusions, in some cases, may also be founded upon subjective conditioning, which excludes a different paradigm, worldview, school of thought or theory.

<sup>24</sup> '[S]cience actually is saturated with values [...] values (and value judgements) and obligations (and ought-judgements) inhere in working scientifically...' Archie J. Bahm (1971), pp. 391–396.

<sup>25</sup> 'This does not oblige us, however, to abandon science or objectivity, or to embrace an uneasy relativism. First, science does express a wealth of *epistemic values* and inevitably incorporates *cultural values* in practice'. Douglas Allchin (1988).

<sup>26</sup> Bernard E. Rollin is Distinguished Professor of Philosophy, Biomedical Sciences at Colorado State University. See his book, *Science and Ethics* (Rollin 2006).

<sup>27</sup> He said: 'How, for example, can we scientifically prove (i.e. empirically test) the claim that only the verifiable may be admitted into science? How can we reconcile the claim that science reveals truth about a public, objective, intersubjective world with the claim that access to that world is only through inherently private perceptions. How can we know that others perceive as we do or, indeed, perceive at all? (We can't even verify the claim that there are other objects.) How can science postulate an event at the beginning of the universe (the Big Bang) that is by definition nonrepeat-

On the related issue of ethics in modern science, Rollin explained that as a student he ‘parroted the claims I was taught about value-free science’, but he ‘had trouble accepting a reality of an objective and directive scientific method, and even more trouble swallowing the material I learned about science being independent of culture and history and, above all else, being ‘objective’” (Rollin 2006, p. 248). He developed a ‘healthy skepticism about scientific ideology’ after studying reports and books about the incidents of fraud and deception in science. Later he abandoned the belief in that ‘value-free’ ideology after working for years with scientists in America. He mentioned that, based on his 28 years of working with biomedical scientists, there is ample evidence of the existence of cheating, data manipulation and falsification and scientific corruption amongst scientists.<sup>28</sup>

#### 4.5 Challenges of the Twenty-First Century for Science and Technology

One year before the advent of the year 2000, a major international conference, ‘World Conference on Science for the Twenty-First Century: a New Commitment’ was organised by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the International Council for Science (ICSU) from 26 June to 1 July 1999 in Budapest. It was organised in light of the advent of the twenty-first century (CE), which would be expected to rely more heavily on S&T to fulfil mankind’s material needs and solve many of contemporary society’s

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able, nontestable, and a singularity? How can we know scientifically that there is reality independent of perception? How can we know scientifically that the world wasn’t created three seconds ago, complete with fossils and us with all our memories? How can we verify any judgments about history? How can we reply that we know things best when we reduce them to mathematical physics, rather than stay at the level of sensory qualities? ... Answers to the above questions are not verified scientifically. In fact, such answers are presuppositional to scientific activity’. *Ibid.*, p. 27. Rollin showed that ‘at least in psychology, a major change in what counted as scientific legitimacy was driven by values.’ *Ibid.*, p. 29. He said that ‘it has been argued that quantum physics in its current form would never have been possible without the cultural context prevailing in Germany between 1918 and 1927’. *Ibid.*, p. 30. He concluded that ‘many scientists lack a grasp of the way in which cultural factors, values, and even ethics shape the acceptance and rejection of whole fields of study...’. *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>28</sup>For a good introduction to the issue of fraud, deception, data falsification and other unethical practices amongst scientists, see Broad and Wade (1982). One reason for occurrences of fraud and deceit amongst contemporary scientists is ‘science and research always function immersed within the surrounding environment. In the modern USA, research scientists are working today within a society where deception, fraud, insincerity, and even outright lying are too often considered useful and clever in advertising, all levels of education, business and commerce, court and legal activities, entertainment, federal and state governments, law enforcement, manufacturing, and, sports. Thus, it would be nothing short of a miracle if some few scientists do not also follow these widespread unethical practices’. ‘Why is it so very hard to eliminate fraud and corruption in scientists?’ <http://dr-moornrs.net/2014/02/20/why-is-it-so-very-hard-to-eliminate-fraud-and-corruption-in-science>. Accessed 21/09/2014.



problems. The conference proved to be a milestone in international discussion towards a new 'social contract' for science.

As concerned Muslims, we mention here that the UNESCO and other UN world conferences and Agenda 21 on sustainable development are praiseworthy efforts in raising global consciousness on the importance of science and technology in facing the daunting environmental challenges of the twenty-first century. Muslim countries and scientists have an important role to play in this agenda, not only by collaborating with the international efforts but also by presenting holistic approaches and solutions provided by the legacy of Islamic civilisation. The necessity of upholding ethical values in scientific works, and the urgency of preserving sustainability of the natural environment and resources in the twenty-first century are highly relevant to the Qur'anic worldview. This is because Muslim scientists who understand the Qur'anic worldview have a religious obligation to offer integrated and holistic perspectives. In most UN conferences or Earth Summits, the religious or theistic perspective is not the mainstream perspective. Thus, planet Earth and its environment – being severely ravaged by greedy and materialistic industrial and capitalistic world systems and the unethical use of S&T for economic growth – have to be made sustainable for present and future generations because this is the only known planet habitable for humans.

The mainstream discourse on environmental sustainability or the increasing awareness of the urgency of ethical concerns in scientific and technological activities are not currently grounded on the premise of nature and the world being the Signs of the Creator and Sustainer or on their being made subservient for human welfare as a Divine Trust. The moral concern for human and environmental wellbeing appears to rest on the premises of enlightened humanism, which, however, is tolerant of religious wisdom and traditional wisdom. Nevertheless, the present environmental crisis and the epistemological crisis of modern science afford new opportunities for Muslim scientists and technologists to become international problem-solvers in at least two ways. Firstly, they can work together with fellow scientists belonging to other faiths or worldviews in facing common environmental and technological problems. Secondly, they have to offer solutions, inventions and innovations from their scientific research, which are in harmony with the Qur'anic worldview, as part of the efforts to bring about a paradigm shift in the study of nature and the physical universe.

## 4.6 Conclusions and Recommendations

It is useful to reflect on the words of eminent Western sociologist Immanuel Wallerstein about the current world system which has been shaped by secularised Western intellectual and economic powers:

The present historical system is in fact in terminal crisis [...] The issue of ecological degradation [...] is a central locus of this debate. No exit within the framework of the existing historical system? [The new world order] ... involves not only a new social system, but new

structures of knowledge, in which philosophy and sciences will no longer be divorced, and we shall return to the singular epistemology within which knowledge was pursued everywhere prior to the creation of the capitalist world-economy. (Wallerstein 1999, pp. 85–86)

We note then that the new world order envisioned by this critical thinker would produce ‘new structures of knowledge’ because of the serious shortcomings of the current paradigms of secularised knowledge. In this new construction of knowledge, ‘philosophy and sciences will no longer be divorced’ and the epistemology of integrated knowledge would be re-established. Such a vision is in accord with what the Qur’anic worldview envisages, but we doubt that the philosophy that he has in mind would be similar to the Qur’anic philosophy, which is the philosophy of the God-fearing ‘*Ulama*’ and the *Ūlū al-Albāb*.

The agnostic, naturalist and atheistic scientists also have their own conceptions of philosophy based on their respective worldviews. Nevertheless, the vision of unifying the humanistic aspects of human thought with the empirical is to be appreciated because it signifies a strong desire to shift from the purely materialistic or scientific worldviews which are contrary to religious (including Islamic) worldviews. For Muslims, the Qur’anic worldview is already available for natural and social scientists to construct the ‘new structures of knowledge’, which combines philosophy and science, and this worldview had produced a brilliant civilisation prior to the rise of the Western modern secular civilisation. One major obstacle to the proposition that there be a major shift from the secular paradigm of knowledge to the holistic paradigm of knowledge is what Wallerstein identified as the spirit of ‘human arrogance’ of secular civilisation:

Human arrogance has been humanity’s greatest self-imposed limitation. This, it seems to me, is the message of the story of Adam in the Garden of Eden. We [the Western scholars] were arrogant in claiming to have received and understood the revelation of God .... We were even more arrogant in asserting that we were capable of arriving at eternal truth through the use of human reason, so fallible a tool. And we have been continuously arrogant in seeking to impose on each other, and with such violence and cruelty, our subjective images of the perfect society. (Wallerstein 1999, p. 250)

In our view the spirit of humility is required, not just to realise the grave mistakes of the modern secular civilisation but to study and understand the universe and natural phenomena in a holistic way. This spirit, we submit, can only grow out from our acknowledgement of the limits of human reason when compared to the limitlessness of Divine Wisdom; of our willingness to acknowledge our true nature as Servants of the One True God; of our responsibility as Vicegerents on His earth who use all the God-given bounties and provisions according to the will of the Creator; of our understanding of nature as Divine Property and Divine Signs which have to be approached with the proper attitude of respect and gratefulness; of our dealing with nature as a form of carrying out the Trust that God has placed on our shoulders; and of our study of the natural phenomena as a form of knowing and worshipping the Compassionate Creator.

We would hope and expect Muslim students of natural science and technology to be the new generation of Islamic scholars – a new generation of ‘*Ulama*’ and *Ūlū al-Albāb* – who begin their study of natural science from the Qur’anic worldview.

The scientific knowledge of nature and the Cosmos as the Property, the Kingdom and Signs of God Almighty that they acquire from this metaphysical and spiritual perspective is not just for utilising the natural resources for the benefit of physical human wellbeing and progress. Its higher purpose is ultimately to make human beings and societies know God through knowing His Signs, amongst which are His presence; His design and purpose; His bounties and blessings; His laws in nature, man and society; His intelligence, knowledge and wisdom; His sovereignty and governance; His love, compassion and mercy; and His artistry, balance and beauty. This knowledge then of the physical universe (*al-kawn*) derived from empirical observation, experimentation, mathematical analysis and contemplative thinking, involving the disciplines of physics, chemistry, biology, astronomy, etc., together with the revealed knowledge of religious truths (*al-dīn*), including the disciplines of Islamic theology (*‘ilm al-tawhīd*), religious worship (*‘ilm al-ibādah*), socio-economic transactions (*‘ilm al-mu‘amalāt*), moral conduct and spirituality (*‘ilm al-akhlāq*), make the life and work of Muslims a comprehensive worship (*‘ibādah*) of God, the Most Gracious.

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**Part II**  
**Philosophy of Science, Cosmology and**  
**Emergence of Biological Systems**

## Chapter 5

# Philosophy of Science in Epistemological Perspective

Alparslan Açıkgenç

**Abstract** Philosophy of science is a fairly new discipline. Many of the problems in this discipline were discussed by both Muslim and Western philosophers alike without putting these issues into a uniform body of knowledge identifying it as a new field with its specific problems, theories and proper methodology. After the rise of a new philosophical approach in the West, however, some more scientific issues were gathered under the aegis of this name and these were introduced to replace the classical metaphysical approach in philosophy. This new philosophical movement is known as ‘logical atomism’. Evaluating this new approach from an Islamic perspective, we see that it eliminates all kinds of metaphysics in the first place and introduces instead a new discipline that can be called ‘scientific metaphysics’ or ‘meta-philosophical scientism’. Secondly, this philosophical approach attempts to destroy the main perspective of other scientific traditions. We are then forced either to accept this position and thus move within its limits of reasoning or develop a totally new alternative to defend cogently our own perspective.

This article pursues the second alternative to establish afresh a philosophy of science from an Islamic perspective, which is also acceptable by other scientific approaches. To do that, we shall try to abstract ourselves from specific tenets of our tradition without losing its main ground and then try to reach universal characteristics of science that are applicable in all traditions. As history of science instructs, every science has its specific subject matter, method, theories and accumulation of discoveries. We need to identify then the subject matter of philosophy of science, its proper method, theories thus far accumulated and its discoveries. Since science is primarily a knowledge acquisition activity, its essence is imbedded in epistemology which makes it mainly a cognitive activity. Consequently, in this endeavour, our method should also be epistemological. Hopefully, this article exposes philosophy of science as a new discipline from the Islamic perspective with an epistemological approach.

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## 5.1 Introduction

Sciences emerged in the past as a result of a certain historical process through which knowledge flows in accordance with the structure of the human knowledge system. If we carefully examine this phenomenon, we can clearly observe three integral factors: first is the process in history; second, the human knowledge system which epistemologically governs this process; and third the emergent body of knowledge. The way we pose what may be called scientific phenomenon in this context tells us that science is not something which existed independently of us in the past and we come to discover it through our inquiry into the nature of things or natural phenomena. In other words, science is not like the things we discover in sciences; it is rather something which emerges as accumulated knowledge which we later organise into a uniform and methodical body of knowledge which enables us to give a name to it. We are thus justified to call this historical-epistemological process ‘scientific phenomenon’, which has many aspects to be investigated philosophically. We may pose a question at this juncture: which discipline is supposed to study this phenomenon? It is the purpose of this article to search for an answer to this question.

We begin our inquiry from the concept of science itself. Since every science emerges as a result of its historical process, we need to examine the nature and structure of this emergent *entity*, in order to analyse it into its main components, which shall enable us to understand the nature of philosophy of science also as a science. This way I hope to put philosophy of science into its right perspective. As a result, we may argue against philosophers such as Feyerabend defending the position that ‘anything does not go in science’. This historical process, then, as a scientific phenomenon, yields an accumulation of knowledge, which has a cluster of certain problems, united under a concept called in later phases of the process ‘subject matter’. We have also indicated that an element in the scientific phenomenon is the human knowledge system which governs the process. The nature of the human knowledge system is such that it works effectively in knowledge inquiry only if we develop a certain *way* to examine complicated problems, which is called ‘method’. As this epistemological phenomenon continues in history, gradually a special kind of knowledge accumulates. Those involved in this activity are aware of this fact and therefore begin to distinguish the kind of knowledge they reached in this way from their everyday knowledge. In fact, most people who live in the same society with them also begin gradually to realise that the knowledge these people possess is different from their common knowledge, which they may also have concerning the same things investigated by the community of these people. It is possible, therefore, to distinguish at least three characteristics in this accumulated knowledge: The first characteristic is theoretical and provisional statements concerning the subject matter and issues facing the knowledge seekers; the second is discoveries concerning these issues; and the third is the fact that the result obtained through their methodology is expressed in a different way than knowledge obtained in everyday life, which uses a different language to formulate their opinions concerning the subject under investigation. The knowledge having the first characteristic may not be accepted by

everyone involved in this activity and therefore, in later phases of the process, it is named a ‘theory’. In some cases, it is possible that a theory may be correct and hence should have been considered a ‘discovery’, but it may not be accepted by all the knowledge seekers in the process and may remain a theory for a long time. But the second characteristic belongs to discoveries which become clear to all knowledge seekers in the process and accepted by them.

Whether this knowledge-seeking community within the general body of the same society obtained the knowledge in this way as a theory or as a new discovery clearly recognised by the same community, all of this knowledge is formulated in accordance with their conceptual framework, which is applied in their knowledge activities in a special language. This language utilises everyday words but with new conceptual significations in such a way that this usage turns them into technical terms utilised in this learning endeavour. It is because of this specific way of both inquiry and expressive formula that, in the later phase of this phenomenon, the searchers of this special kind of knowledge are enabled to develop a specific concept to express their activity and manner of investigation together with the results obtained in this process. This concept becomes the name of this discipline in future developments. In fact, all the nomenclature within each specific discipline is developed in this way.

It is possible to observe at this stage that this phenomenon reveals four significant components of the knowledge reached at a later period of this historical process, subject matter, method, theories and discoveries, which are in the true sense accumulated knowledge. In this historical process, knowledge seekers are also named variously in certain traditions: scholar, scientist or ‘man of science’. In the Islamic case, they are called ‘*ālim*, ‘*ḥakīm*, ‘*ārif*, etc., depending on the orientation of the person. Usually, at one point of this process in history, either a scholar or some scholars notice that some subjects of study are different inherently from others; they may refer to them in general as ‘being’ but they notice that every kind of being cannot be investigated in the same manner. As a result, they separate some subjects from others and, in order to give a unity to the newly established area of study, they give a name to it. In this way, the newly emerging areas of investigation are formed into disciplines with specific concepts as names of the discipline. This epistemologically characterised phenomenon, which unfolds in history, is what I have named ‘scientific phenomenon’, and the process that takes place in history can thus be called ‘scientific process’ because it leads to the emergence of specific sciences.<sup>1</sup>

Our analysis of the scientific phenomenon can be applied to different civilisations in which similar historical processes are observed. However, we have so far neglected one more factor which is also operative in this process. As we know, in the past, scientific activities were carried out in civilisations more or less independently of each other no matter how much they influenced each other. These somewhat independent characters of scientific phenomena in the past caused civilisations to develop different characteristics. In order to understand the nature of these

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<sup>1</sup>For a detailed analysis of this process, see Açıkgenç (2014), especially Chapter 1.



differences, we need to examine each scientific process which belongs to a specific civilisation. The totality of these characteristics belonging to a specific civilisation is unified as a social phenomenon developed by the community of the scholars actively involved in this process. The characteristics developed by such a community can be named its ‘scientific tradition’. In that case, we must add one more factor to bring the integral factors of the scientific phenomenon to four: first is the process in history; second, the human knowledge system, which epistemologically governs this process; third, the emergent body of knowledge; and fourth, the scientific community which turns this process into a (scientific) tradition by actively carrying out their scientific work within the scholarly culture developed through the similar works of generations of scholars and scientists. When we consider these factors, we may see how complicated the scientific phenomenon is. We cannot therefore define science only by paying attention to its cognitive character which is based on the human knowledge system. Scientific phenomenon cannot indeed be analysed without considering all of these factors at once; an isolationist approach will fail to define science adequately. If this is the case, then we need a special discipline whose task is to investigate the scientific phenomenon. This special science is nothing other than *philosophy of science*. In what follows, our article will concentrate on analysing this discipline paying attention to its subject matter, method, theories and accumulation of knowledge.

## 5.2 The Nature and Method of Philosophy of Science

The first scholar who used the term ‘philosophy of science’ belongs to Western scientific tradition – the scientist William Whewell (1794–1866). Since Whewell argued that philosophy of science must be inferred from the history of science which is the field where scientific phenomenon is exemplified, he developed this discipline at the same time for the study of the history of science. As Laura Snyder argued, ‘it appears that what was important to Whewell was not whether a philosophy of science had been inferred from a study of the history of science, but rather, whether a philosophy of science was *inferable from* it. That is, regardless of how a philosopher came to invent his/her theory, s/he must be able to show it to be exemplified in the actual scientific practice used throughout history’<sup>2</sup> (Snyder 2012). In any case, it is clear that Whewell established philosophy of science for the first time as an independent discipline in Western scientific tradition as a result of his approach to the history of science. I would like to give below his definition of this new discipline:

The philosophy of science, if the phrase were to be understood in the comprehensive sense which most naturally offers itself to our thoughts, would imply nothing less than a complete insight into the essence and conditions of all real knowledge, and an exposition of the best methods for the discovery of new truths. We must narrow and lower this conception, in

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<sup>2</sup>Gender indications are by the present writer.

order to mould it into a form in which we may make it the immediate object of our labours with a good hope of success; yet still it may be a rational and useful undertaking, to endeavour to make some advance towards such a philosophy... . The present work has been written with a view of contributing, in some measure, however small it may be, towards such an undertaking. (Whewell 1847, p. 1)

Since Whewell approached philosophy of science from its historical aspect, he developed a correct perspective concerning this discipline. But it is clear from his approach that he did not take science as a multidimensional phenomenon and thus paid attention only to some issues as subject matter of this new discipline. Many issues he discussed in his work were already discussed by previous philosophers as issues in proper branches of philosophy. Therefore, Whewell named his work *The Philosophy of the Inductive Sciences, Founded Upon Their History*. The title of his work already tells us a lot about his approach. For example, the proper method of science is induction and therefore he developed a philosophy of only these sciences.

Later in the nineteenth century and early twentieth century philosophers such as Moritz Schlick (1882–1936), Otto Neurath (1882–1945), Hans Reichenbach (1891–1953), Rudolf Carnap (1891–1970), Bertrand Russell (1872–1970), Ernest Nagel (1901–1985), Alfred J. Ayer (1910–1989), Carl G. Hempel (1905–1997) and Hillary Putnam (1926) carried this venture to its limits by adding the positivist conception of science. In this way, philosophy of science acquired a new characteristic without any specific dimension of subject matter. Discussions still concentrate on issues that are problematic in many different special sciences. If this trend continues, there will be no possible definition of philosophy of science. We, therefore, need to come up with a specific conceptually expressed subject matter of this new area of scientific inquiry so that its unity does not fade into oblivion. In this regard, the concept we deduce from the inquiries accumulated thus far as subject matter of philosophy of science must be comprehensive enough to cover all their discussions, problems and issues at hand. On the other hand, this concept which shall express the subject matter of this new science must exclude issues that cannot be covered by philosophy of science. It is this concept that will also signify the nature of philosophy of science, for, as we shall see, sciences are defined on the basis of their subject matters. Moreover, the method of this science will also be determined on the basis of this concept which is delimiting.

One of the most significant characteristics of science is the fact that it has a specific subject matter which is well defined and expressed as *one* concept. Let us consider Whewell's definitions of some specific sciences: 'Dynamics is the science which treats of the Motions of Bodies, Statics is the science which treats of the Pressure of Bodies which are in equilibrium and therefore at rest' (Whewell 1896, p. 6). It is clearly seen in these definitions that a science is defined on the basis of its subject matter. It is this fact that renders subject matter extremely significant for all sciences, and in this sense we need to approach philosophy of science in order to determine its exact nature.

Most philosophy of science books published in the West enumerate the problems discussed in this discipline as its subject matter without providing a well-defined

concept as to its subject matter.<sup>3</sup> It is not possible to pinpoint the exact nature of a science by providing a list of problems discussed in that science; all it can provide is only a glimpse and vague understanding of the science. It is the concept which holds the nature of a thing in unity and thus clarifies its real nature that is critical. However, the concept which we have tried to elucidate here as ‘scientific phenomenon’ is actually the subject matter of philosophy of science which at the same time signifies the true nature of this science for it is this concept that holds together all the aspects of science in its four integral factors. This means that philosophy of science is the proper discipline that must deal with the nature of science first as a process in history; second, as a knowledge-seeking activity governed by the human knowledge system epistemologically governing this process; third as a body of knowledge unified under a concept; and fourth, as a tradition formed by the community of scholars involved in this activity. We express all these as a phenomenon properly called ‘science’. Of course, when the subject matter of a science is expressed in this way, there will be many problems surrounding that subject matter. We normally do not list these problems in the definition of a science. Rather a scientist trained in this way becomes acquainted with all other problems in that science as they unfold in its history.

The method of philosophy of science is determined on the basis of its subject matter as it is the case with all other sciences. Obviously, its method cannot be an experimental approach. It is rather observational and analytical. Observation is made in history of science which should pay attention to its past and above all present. We need to examine the way scientific activities were conducted in the past and the way they were understood and practised as well as the way these activities are conducted today. The observation is supposed to be comprehensive enough in order to provide sufficient material for the nature of science and other problems discussed in philosophy of science. Then these observations are analysed logically and philosophically in order to deduce conclusions concerning these problems.

This observational and analytical method must also pay attention to the epistemology of science which as an applied epistemology must consider pure epistemology as its foundation. This gives us a new conception of the epistemology of science which is rendered in this context as a branch of philosophy of science. Since pure epistemology investigates the human knowledge system in its operations whilst we are engaged in a knowledge acquisition activity, we can examine the same issues in the epistemology of science for, since science is primarily a knowledge acquisition activity, the human knowledge system will operate in the same way as it operates in any kind of other knowledge acquisition activity. In that case, epistemology of science will investigate only the mental frameworks utilised by a scientist whilst he/she is engaged in a scientific activity. It is by this fact that we have taken the human knowledge system as an integral factor of scientific phenomenon.

We need to add further as an approach in philosophy of science that scientific activities do not take place at one point in history and then end there. Clearly from the history of science in any civilisation, the scientific phenomenon is also a process

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<sup>3</sup> See, for example, Richard Boyd et al. (1991) and Thompson (2001).

that takes place in history. This historical dimension of science forces us to investigate the problems of philosophy of science from two perspectives: the perspective of historical continuity within the civilisation of a scientific tradition and, since there will be a community of scientists involved in this scientific process, the sociological aspect of science must also be taken into consideration. The present studies carried out in the West as sociology of science are actually not sociology of science but rather 'the sociology of scientific communities', as these studies are carried out primarily by sociologists and not by philosophers with some insignificant exceptions.<sup>4</sup> In that case, a philosophy of science must consider scientific phenomenon from all its aspects which we have counted here as its fundamental factors.

### 5.3 Philosophy of Science in a Civilisational Perspective

As we live in the age of globalisation, many human practices have lost their local characteristics. This is especially true of those enterprises which also have some universal characteristics such as scientific activities. We may thus assert that today there is a global scientific tradition utilised by all scientists and scholars. We no longer write or publish (only) in our own countries; we do not organise conferences and seminars that are limited to local scholars alone. As a result, our local scientific differences are gradually lost; all such characteristics, if they are able to influence the global practice, are emulated globally. There is also no doubt that this global scientific tradition is Western in character, which developed as a result of its own scientific process in the early Middle Ages but was transformed into a tradition with a totally new face coloured primarily by secularism and its worldview after the nineteenth century. It is this transformed secularistic scientism as a scientific tradition which has become global today. That is why there are trends today both in the West and in Muslim countries trying to resist this global scientific phenomenon and its philosophy. Many Muslim scholars feel that the present epistemology of science held by this global scientism spread throughout the world is contrary to the Islamic perspective in the philosophy of scientific phenomena. In other words, the philosophy of the present scientific global tradition is destructive of the value systems and spirituality embedded in previous traditional scientific phenomena found in different civilisations.

Unfortunately, today Muslim scientists are trained in a Western global scientific tradition through which they acquire its approach and methods together with its secularistic values without even noticing them. As a result, they are unable to develop an Islamic approach in their scientific activities. In fact, many Muslim scientists with this global approach do not even realise that what seems to be global in this age is not necessarily universal, and as such, they cannot distinguish between what is global and what is universal. Consequently, if they remain loyal to their religion, then they think that the Islamic perspective in scientific enterprise merely

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<sup>4</sup>See, for example, Merton (1973), Barber (1972), Sorokin (1937–1941), and also Barber (1952).

consists of performing their religious duties such as the *şalâh*, fasting and other moral duties. In this way, they think that as long as they believe in Islam and perform these duties, then they are good Muslim scientists no matter how they practice science whether with a Western understanding or as a globally widespread scientific mentality. They do not realise that this contemporary scientific culture is destructive to the Islamic foundations of the philosophy of science. How do we remedy this state of affairs?

We have already discussed four integral factors in scientific phenomenon: Two of these factors make science a universal phenomenon and the other two render it relative and thus local belonging to a specific social context which is a civilisation. The two factors which render science universal are subject matter which we expressed as the emergent body of knowledge and the human knowledge system. The other two factors which render science local are the process in history which we express as ‘scientific process’ and the scientific community. We would like to argue that, with regard to the first two factors, science is universal and whatever is universal can also be global. Therefore, all humans from different cultural backgrounds can cooperate with each other thanks to these factors. We may express this also as an aphorism: since the human knowledge system is universal and operates in the same way in all humans of all backgrounds and since the subject studied by these human beings is also the same, which is the universe or, in a more general sense, ‘being’, then the knowledge resulting from the interaction of these two factors will also be very much the same.

On the other hand, because there are other factors involved in scientific activities both epistemologically and sociohistorically, the perspective of this knowledge and the way it is expressed will be different. One common analogy illustrates our point: the human system of digestion is universal and thus it operates exactly the same in all human activities of nourishment. Moreover, what the human system of digestion utilises as food also comes from the same source. But this does not mean that all human societies have exactly the same culinary culture because again there are other factors involved in the process of nourishment. This can be explained on the basis of the epistemology of science. However, we shall try to provide a brief explanation of this as our own perspective springing from the Islamic scientific tradition, which will hopefully shed light on the points raised, considered to be the most basic issues of philosophy of science.

### ***5.3.1 Epistemology as the Universal Element***

We have already stated that epistemology of science attempts a logical analysis of the mental frameworks operating in the mind of a scientist whilst he/she is engaged in scientific activity. The mental frameworks through which scientific activities ensue may be briefly described with their functional names: First is the worldview

which represents our point of view and as such can be named *perspective*; second is the knowledge structure in the worldview which provides a mental framework for the scientific activities and thus identifies its main location and such can be named *position*; third is the general scientific conceptual scheme identifying the borders of a scientific activity in a specific scientific tradition and such can be named *frame*; and the fourth is the specific scientific conceptual scheme which provides the manner in which the scientist looks at his discipline, and as such we can name it *outlook*.<sup>5</sup> Now if this epistemology together with its sociology is applied to history, we can discover a process that is also historical. Looking at the history of science from this epistemological point of view, we should be able to see that the history of science is not like the history of natural, social or political events for there is a set of laws in our constitution that govern this process within which scientific activities take place. The complete set of these laws are within the nature of our system of knowledge, and thus the scientific process is primarily governed by the human anatomy of knowledge system. In this sense, science is a cognitive activity.

We must also realise that this cognitive activity takes place in a *society* but *through time*. As a result, it acquires these characteristics as well. It must, then, be the objective of sociology of science to explore and eventually expose these characteristics. The best way this can be exemplified is through the scientific process which we claim to be *continuous* within its context and hence not *discrete*. These words describe the nature of the history of science or rather a *scientific tradition* within a specific civilisation. If that history is taken as a process, then it is not discrete within its own spatiotemporal continuum. But it is interrupted if it passes into another space-time continuum and as such it is discontinuous. By this we mean, a scientific process does not cross over into another civilisation, and in this sense, its continuity is only in the civilisation out of which it has arisen. That is why we claim that it is discontinuous in this sense. People who are active in a knowledge and learning tradition in another civilisation may be influenced by a scientific process in another civilisation. But this does not mean that that process began to flow in this foreign civilisation as a new social context. It is this approach to the history of science that brings us to a fresh concept that I have identified as *scientific process* which, I believe, will shed light also on our understanding of science culture as manifested in scientific activities. I shall now dwell upon this issue in order to explain how scientific cultures are manifested through scientific process.

In order to achieve this, I shall try to carefully describe the scientific process as exemplified in Islamic civilisation. Our analysis in this context shall also demonstrate the local and thus the relative character of science exemplified in the past by different civilisations.

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<sup>5</sup>For a detailed analysis of these concepts and the way they are deduced epistemologically, see Açıkgenç (2014), pp. 32–58.

### 5.3.2 *Sociohistorical Factor as the Local Civilisational Element*

We may now argue that science springs from the human system of knowledge, which may be anatomically analysed into its epistemic functions, such as observing, perceiving, thinking, conceptualising, imagining, arguing and intuiting. If human biological systems were to work independently of each other in an isolated manner without any context whatsoever, then this description of science would have been totally adequate. If, on the other hand, we take the human knowledge system as only one *structure* amongst other biological systems, such as the nervous system and digestive system, comprising the whole bodily organism, then we may confidently claim that this description of science is insufficient. Besides, our biological systems also function within certain contexts; to give an example, the digestive system functions within the context of a food circle which may be developed in the social environment of the individual into a culinary culture. In the same way, the human knowledge system functions within a 'knowledge circle' which is always developed in the social environment of the individual into a knowledge culture. It is this culture that sustains human scientific activities as well. Moreover, all knowledge activities in a society continue just like all other human activities throughout time, which stamps the historical characteristic on all such activities including scientific ones as well.

In order to illustrate this point, we would like to go back in time to the early Muslim community where there is no science and learning activity that may lead to the rise of scientific activities. How can a process begin to yield in the first place a learning tradition that will lead to the emergence of sciences? We first apply our theory of dynamic forces as the condition for scientific cultivation to explain the initial stage of the process. At this stage, we find nothing but moral struggle in the form of the newly arising religion, Islam. But this moral struggle must lead to a learning and knowledge tradition so that there will be an adequate context for the rise of sciences. According to the epistemology utilised here, first a concept of knowledge that would perform a fundamental function in the worldviews of the members of this society should emerge in their minds. If this concept of knowledge leads to a structural element in their worldviews, then together with the moral struggle there will be intellectual activities in that society. This is in fact what happened: through the concept of *'ilm* utilised in the Qur'an and cultivated by the Prophet (*peace be upon him*), it gradually acquired the character of a doctrinal concept in the Islamic worldview (for details, see Rosenthal 1970). As a result, together with the moral struggle, an Islamic intellectualism began. This is because moral struggle cannot be maintained by sheer force; it must sustain itself with rational argumentation and an intellectual culture. As a result, when this moral struggle supported by the early Islamic intellectualism gradually developed, those who were involved in the struggle tried to shape the society in accordance with their moral ideals.

Therefore, social mobility began following the moral struggle. It is therefore possible to observe in the early Muslim community moral, intellectual and social dynamism, all of which gradually led to economic, political and legal reforms. The whole society began to reshape itself.

Perhaps just after a few decades, we begin to see in the early Muslim community certain intellectuals and thinkers who are simply interested in *knowing* certain problems in a way others do not *know*. There are many *modes* in which we can know things, but there is one way of knowing things, which is not only systematic and organised but also questions its own findings. In other words, this way of knowing is not satisfied by just having information about the subject of inquiry; it rather questions its problems and analyses its findings, if any, or else its own mode of handling the inquiry so that it can actually know the thing as it is. That is why at this stage we see in certain circles, such as the school of Kufa, Mecca and Medina, certain thinkers who established themselves in systematic learning, and thus a group of interested disciples who are also interested knowing things the way the *Master* knows things grew around them. As soon as this happened, the early Muslim community stood a good chance of establishing a tradition of studying things in order to know them in a way that is different from the ordinary way of knowing things. This early tradition had not yet acquired the character of science and therefore, we shall call the culture they established 'Islamic knowledge tradition'.

Now, our knowledge system functions through 'naming' because we name something in order to be able to communicate about it, and in fact, we name things in order to produce concepts about them. The knowledge produced in this Islamic knowledge tradition of learning was also *named* because, as we have said, these groups of people are interested in knowing things in a way that is different from other types of daily knowing. In that case, they will produce a concept expressing their activity so that they can distinguish it from other activities of knowing. We usually choose names or concepts from the related activity; since the activity is *knowing*, the best name for this tradition is also *knowing*. That is why in the Greek tradition, Aristotle gave the name *episteme* for science; in Islam, first the term *fiqh* (to grasp, comprehend, which still means 'to know differently'), and then '*ilm*', is used to name sciences<sup>6</sup>; in the Western scientific tradition also, the Latin term *scientia* is used for this purpose. This way, individual sciences began to emerge as a result of this process, and the study of these sciences gradually turned the existing tradition of knowledge and learning into a 'scientific tradition'. We have described here the path sciences took in the history of Islamic civilisation. It is this historical path which we identify as 'scientific process' which is a civilisational phenomenon, and as such, we can say 'scientific process of a scientific tradition' because it is the route that tradition itself takes (Açıkgenç 2013).

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<sup>6</sup>For a detailed exposition of these concepts, see Açıkgenç (1996), pp. 86–92.



### 5.3.3 *A Brief Historical Case Study: Islamic Scientific Tradition*

We have tried to show that philosophy of science is that branch of philosophy which investigates scientific phenomenon which is a multidimensional human enterprise. This multidimensional nature of science makes it complicated to study and, as a result, many other issues are yielded in this investigation. However, four aspects of the scientific venture are essential for the nature of science. If these are explored and analysed carefully, we may reach a comprehensive definition of science. First of all, we all know that science is a cognitive activity because the actual purpose of any scientific activity is to gain an insight into the subject of investigation. Therefore, as a knowledge acquisition activity, science is primarily ‘knowledge’ and not an activity. In that case, this activity is based on the human knowledge system; to use our traditional term, it is an epistemological process. Secondly, as a process, it takes place in history, by which I mean it is carried over from one generation of scholars and scientists to another. This historical aspect of science must also be taken into consideration in a philosophy of science. Thirdly, as result of this process, a body of knowledge is unified under a concept which becomes the name of that science. Fourthly, science is also an activity carried out in a tradition formed by the community of scholars involved in this activity. Although in the pre-scientific era there is no scientific tradition, the society developed a knowledge tradition which functioned in the earlier phases of a scientific process. We express all these as a phenomenon properly called ‘science’ and offer the following definition: ‘Science is an organised body of accumulated theoretical knowledge and discoveries, named through scientific consciousness which arises as a result of the process of investigating a well defined subject matter with a certain method’.

The importance of this approach to philosophy of science may be shown in one characteristic of the Islamic knowledge tradition upon which all scientific activities in Islamic civilisation are built as a scientific tradition. In the Islamic civilisation, knowledge is represented in a hierarchical structure specifying the place of scientific knowledge in that tradition which emerged approximately towards the end of the second century (namely, around 800s CE). If we are able to identify this tradition, then we can safely point to its technical terms.

We have thus identified where scientific knowledge belongs in our scientific tradition. If our analysis is kept in view, we may draw the following conclusions concerning the characteristics of a scientific tradition that is based on such a conceptual scheme. Firstly, the worldview functions in the mind as an epistemological ground within which all our activities, be they moral and daily activities or scientific and religious, are conducted. Since the knowledge structure of a worldview develops out of its fundamental notions such as *tawhīd*, prophethood and final judgement, the doctrinal concept of knowledge within that structure will be imbued with its moral and spiritual outlook. As we have seen, it is in fact such a concept of knowledge,

which was formed in the minds of the early Muslims, which we called ‘illuminated knowledge’. This approach to knowledge does not permit its conception as *power*. Knowledge in this sense is utilised towards the perfection of human character, and as such, although it is a cognitive concept, it assumes at once a moral and imperative function as well. This is clear in the main source of Islam, the Qur’an, which states that ‘amongst His servants, who have knowledge (*‘Ulama’*) are the God-fearing’ (*al-Fatir* 35:28).

Secondly, since the scientific conceptual scheme in Islam is also derived from the knowledge structure and ultimately it is the manifestation of the Islamic worldview, it will carry all the characteristics of both mental frameworks. In this sense, such a scientific conceptual scheme cannot and will not include concepts contradicting its moral and spiritual outlook. It is as if *automatically* in line with religion and the theories or ideas and doctrines developed within such a scheme will be complimentary upon the religious truth rather than negating it. This is indeed the result of the ‘set of cultural values and mores’ (Merton 1973, p. 268) developed on the basis of the Islamic worldview by the community of scholars operating within Islamic knowledge activities.

Thirdly, with respect to each individual science, there will arise another specific scientific conceptual scheme comprising the network of concepts utilised in that particular science. The concepts and theories of each particular science are directly concerned with facts, and as such they may not have a direct bearing upon religion and morality. But each particular fact and as a result its corresponding concept, idea or theory is like a brick coming together with other bits of ideas and conceptions forming the general reality as we conceive it. When each fact of a particular science is thus formed into a coherent whole, it necessarily bears a relation to the religious truth which is concerned with the general conception of reality as a manifestation of God. Therefore, particular facts and their conceptions in particular sciences have an indirect relation to religious truth. The facts with their conceptions that are developed within the Islamic scientific conceptual scheme cannot yield such a disparity between science and religion. As a result, we provide Table 5.1 as an example of Islamic science culture based on the knowledge tradition it developed from its fundamental sources.

**Table 5.1** The Islamic science culture and the knowledge tradition it developed

	Islamic revealed knowledge tradition	Islamic scientific tradition
1.	The purpose of knowledge is guidance	The purpose is to capture <i>reality</i>
2.	The method is ‘conveying’ ( <i>tabligh</i> )	Scientific method
3.	It utilises the light of the heart	The light of reason
4.	Its principle is renewal ( <i>tajdid</i> )	Its principle is ‘scientific growth’
5.	Its language addresses the heart	It addresses the mind
6.	Knowledge is light and thus enlightens	It needs light
7.	It addresses all human levels	It addresses only the specialists
8.	It is granted by divine grace	It is acquired

## 5.4 Conclusions

The above result in Islamic scientific tradition is striking, for, if we contrast Revealed Knowledge to scientific knowledge, we will see that the latter is dark and has no light within itself and as such needs the guidance of the Revealed Knowledge which is pure light and enlightening. We should not misunderstand this by concluding that the Revelation is authoritative in scientific problems. What is rather meant is that the human mind is authoritative in scientific issues but not in putting this scientific knowledge into the proper perspective. Let us give an example: a scientist studies the growth of a tree and discovers how biologically it grows. But then he/she concludes that he/she has been able to explain how a tree grows naturally, and therefore, he/she has proved that there is no need to look for a supreme being beyond what he/she has discovered in this particular science. Now since this particular science has cited no guidance from the revealed knowledge, it has no authority to pass on to such a conclusion. In this case, it is Revelation which is authoritative and thus it has the right to guide science to the existence of that Supreme Being. I would like to illustrate this point with some more examples given also by contemporary Muslim thinkers.

Considering the conclusions we draw from the general characteristics of the Islamic scientific tradition, we may further infer the following characteristics as belonging to science developed within that scheme. First of all, such a science will not lead to bewilderment because of its scientific descriptions of the natural phenomena. It will rather lead the inquiring mind to a feeling of wonder concerning the arts and wonders of the creator for that kind of a science will conceive its subject matter as a creation of God and as such its facts manifest not the facts themselves but rather the Beautiful Names of Allah. In this sense, Islamic science culture conceives each particular science as deciphering the wonders of an aspect of God manifested in that particular fact. In this connection, a contemporary Muslim thinker Said Nursi (1992), for example, suggested the language of the Qur'an as a model, which is, as we have seen, used in early Islamic scientific vocabulary. He argued that the Divine language, as it is guidance for us in every respect of our social life, should be taken as guidance in expressing scientific discoveries and truth or even in formulating scientific theories. The question is then: How does the Qur'an address the natural phenomena? Nursi put this question in the following manner: 'Why does the Qur'an not speak of beings in the same way as philosophy and science?' He replied that the Qur'an speaks of certain phenomena discussed in the sciences in a rather simple and superficial manner, because its actual purpose is to explain the meanings of the universe laid in front of us as a great book in order to make known its Creator. For this reason, it uses a language which leads man to form a habit of mind to look at things not for themselves but for their Creator, and this is the true guidance whilst the state of mind which results from the language of secular

philosophy and science leads man to look at beings for themselves. Moreover, this language addresses in particular only the scientists. But the message of the Qur'an is general and it addresses all classes of men.<sup>7</sup>

This way the universe is depicted as a huge kingdom and the earth a palace in it and the sun as a lamp, the moon as a night light and the stars as decorations for man to reflect upon in order to reach the grandeur and splendour of its creator. But if we look at the language of the science and philosophy developed today when it discusses the same subject, it says that: 'The sun is a vast burning liquid mass. It causes the planets, which have been flung off from it to revolve around it. Its mass is such-and-such. It is this, it is that, and so on'. This kind of a language represents the sun, as well as other beings, as things on their own, without an owner; it causes in our hearts an awesome dread and a fearful wonder. Therefore, it does not give to the spirit any perfection of knowledge or any moral lesson. It is this kind of science which he described as 'divorced from religion' (Açıkgeç 2013).

In that case, conceptions that emerge out of the Islamic scientific conception do not lead to idle amazement; they rather have an educational intent. Moreover, they do not lead to estrangement; they rather guide the ones knowledgeable in science to feel at home. In this way, existence is not rendered meaningless but that every being and a fact in the universe has a purpose reflected in the scientific knowledge as dependent upon a divine name. Finally, as Nursi pointed out, 'The light of conscience is religious sciences (*ulûm-u dîniye*). The light of the mind is civilised sciences (*fünûn-u medeniye*). Reconciliation of both manifests the truth. The student's skills develop further with these two (sciences). When they are separated from the former superstition and from the latter, corruption and skepticism is born' (Nursi 1996, p. 252). Our investigation hopefully has demonstrated this point in a theoretical way paying attention to the epistemology, sociology and history of science, all of which are regarded here as branches in the philosophy of science.

## 5.5 Policy Recommendations

The following policy recommendations arise from this investigation:

- We must understand the nature of science and how it developed in civilisations if we wish our societies to be actively involved in scientific achievements.
- Understanding the nature of science requires good insight into its history in order to discover the main elements active in shaping scientific knowledge. We must not be misled that science is universal, no matter how much its findings may be universal, to ensure we can also see its cultural background.

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<sup>7</sup>For example, see Nursi (1996), pp. 251–252.

- Today we are actively involved worldwide in scientific exchanges. This phenomenon may suggest that science is universal and never had local characteristics. I hope our article convincingly showed otherwise. In that case, in today's scientific understanding, we can also add our own past scientific culture and its values. This will not change the results we reach in our scientific studies. It will only add values and a new perspective. However, in order to do this, our future scientists must be trained in the history of Islamic science and its philosophical perspective. This will add to their understanding of science from an epistemological perspective, and they will be able to develop their own philosophy of science as well. I hope this article has sufficiently demonstrated these points.

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# Chapter 6

## Rumi on the Living Earth: A Sufi Perspective

Mulyadhi Kartanegara

**Abstract** Contrary to the modern scientists' view, most Muslim scholars believe that the earth, or in a more general sense the universe, is alive. It is so, since, according to them, like a man, the earth (world) also has its own life principle. Ikhwan al-Safa' called it the universal soul (*al-nafs al-kullīyah*), which, according to them, brought the universe to life. This article presents Rumi's view on the world (earth) by, first, discussing his view on love (*'ishq*) as the fundamental natural force that brought the world into life, capable of loving and being loved. Next, it is shown how this love caused the universe to move and develop gradually, in the manner of the so-called theory of evolution. Then discussed are the fundamental similarities and differences of Rumi's evolutionary theory with other similar theories by Mulla Sadra, Charles Darwin and Henri Bergson. Finally, the human position in the universe is discussed so that we can reflect on what we, as God's representative (*khalīfah*), should do to maintain and preserve the excellent qualities of our beloved earth.

### 6.1 Introduction

Due to a long and intense exposure to the modern secular world-view, most of us, who live in modern times, have forgotten or simply do not know that the philosophical or spiritual wisdoms of Muslim scholars about the universe are very different from the modern world-view. It is only now that we are slowly coming to understand their significance in shedding a brilliant light to illuminate the dark world we currently have. Take for example, in the tenth century, the Ikhwan al-Safa', a group of Muslim philosophers, in their *Rasā'il* (Ikhwan al-Safa' n.d., p. 25), called the universe the great man (*al-insān al-kabīr*), while man is the microcosm (*al-'ālam al-ṣaghīr*). It is so, according to them, because like the human being, the universe also has a single soul, called the universal soul (*al-nafs al-kullīyah*), that runs through all the parts of the universe, just like the human soul running through all

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parts of the human body. They even say that every part of the world, be it mineral substance, vegetable, animal or the human being, has its own soul, a particular soul (*al-nafs al-juz'iyah*). Therefore, according to them, the universe and all of its parts are alive.

However, in this article, the writer will not discuss the Ikhwan al-Safa's view on it, but rather present Rumi's view on the earth as a living creature. In so doing, his brief biography will be provided, so the reader can identify who is Rumi, and then his view on love (*'ishq*) will be addressed as the fundamental natural force that brought the world into life, capable of loving and being loved. Next will be shown how this love as the life principle has caused the universe to move and develop in a gradual manner, in the so-called theory of evolution. Later will be addressed the fundamental similarities and differences between his theory and other similar theories by Mulla Sadra, Charles Darwin and Henri Bergson. Finally, the writer will discuss the human position in the universe reflecting on what we, as God's representative (*khalifah*), should do to maintain and preserve the qualities of our beloved earth.

Jalaluddin Rumi, known to his followers as 'Mawlana' (our master), was born in 1207 CE at Balkh, Afghanistan. He passed away in 1273 leaving some extremely beautiful and profound works, such as *Divān-i Shams-i Tabrīz* and his masterpiece the *Mathnawī*.

## 6.2 The Living Universe

Differing from our conventional belief in the passive and static universe, Rumi believed that the universe is alive, organic and intelligent. Rumi's statement that 'the universe can love and be loved' reveals to us the essence of his world-view. Different from what we usually think, the universe, according to Rumi, is an organic creature endowed with life and even intelligence. God, for the Sufis, is the most fascinating object, the most lovable and beautiful. According to them, based on a sacred (*Qudsī*) Hadith, God's motive to create the universe is love. The universe was created through divine love or more correctly through the breath of the merciful (*nafs al-raḥmān*), causing love (*'ishq*, as he calls it) permeating all parts of the universe and moving it afterwards. It is love, according to him, that has enlivened and activated the universe and endowed it with life and intelligence. In one of his poems, Rumi (1977, vol. III, pp. 245–246) said,

*In (the view of) the intellect, heaven is man and earth woman  
 Whatever (that) heaven casts forth, this (earth) fosters.  
 When it (earth) hath no heat remaining, it (heaven) sends it;  
 When no freshness and moisture remains, it bestows it.  
 Heaven is turning giddily (in the world) of time, like man (prowling) around (in the search  
 of) gain for the wife's sake.  
 And this earth practises housewiferies: it attends to births and suckling that (which it  
 bears)*

*Therefore, regard earth and heaven as endowed with intelligence, since they do the works of intelligent beings;*

*Unless these two sweethearts are tasting (delight) from one another, then why are they creeping together like a mate.*

Not only are these verses beautiful, but they also make us realise a world-view different from ours. The lifeless universe has been made alive and intelligent by 'love': It is 'love' for God. Rumi (1977, vol. V, p. 231) said, 'Know that wheeling heavens are turned by the waves of love. Were it not for love, the world would be frozen'. Therefore, love is considered as the most fundamental force of the universe and was responsible for its dynamic movement.

### 6.3 Relation Between Love and Evolution

When he calls this fundamental force 'love' (*'ishq*), of course, Rumi did this on purpose. By calling it love, he wanted us to understand that love has given the universe and its movement a certain direction or destination towards which it should move and does not render it blind. Rumi said, 'Whether love be from this (earthly) side or from that (heavenly) side, in the end it leads us yonder' (Rumi 1977, vol. I, p. 10). Therefore, the power of love is not random or blind but purposeful and leads the lover towards its goal, the Beloved God. Love has made the universe a living creature, capable of loving and being loved. This is why Rumi said that upon seeing God's beauty, the universe fell in love with God, the Beloved. Rumi said, 'Thou didst show the delightness (beauty) of Being thou had caused not-being to fall in love with thee' (Rumi 1977, vol. I, p. 35). Since the beginning of time, the universe has always tried to draw closer and closer to God. 'Each of them would be (as) stiff and immovable like ice, (if it is not for love); how should they be flying and seeking like locusts?' (Rumi 1977, vol. V, p. 231).

Why does the universe want to be close with God, the Beloved? It has been natural for any lovers to want to be close to their beloved. The farther a lover is from his beloved, the more intense is his longing for union and the more ardent his love for the Beloved. Rumi has deliberately chosen the term *'ishq* to describe this love and not *maḥabbah*, which also means love, for while *maḥabbah* indicates the close relation between the lover and his Beloved, *'ishq* indicates a sad and long separation from each other (Ernst 1986, p. 98). Therefore, it is probably more appropriate to translate the word *'ishq*, with 'ardent love' rather than simply 'love'.

It was the desire of the universe, the lover (*'āshiq*), to be close and to unite with God, the beloved (*ma'shūq*), that first brought about the evolutionary movement in the universe at its different levels: cosmic, geological and biological, even mental and spiritual. Why does the universe long for God? This is because there was a desire or love in everything to be perfect. Mawlana said, 'Everything is in love with the Perfection and hastens upwards like a sapling' (Rumi 1977, vol. V, p. 231). Since this Perfection is but God himself, then everything in this world struggles to



approach Him, the perfect One. Therefore, it was the desire to be perfect (like God) that was responsible for the evolutionary movement in the universe.

The above verse 'Everything is in love with the Perfection and hastens upwards like a sapling' probably has already alluded to a creative-vertical movement of evolution and not a horizontal-linear one. This vertical movement of the universe is beautifully described by Rumi as that of 'flying and searching locusts' for lights. 'If it is not for love, how should they be flying and seeking like locusts?' Rumi (1977, vol. IV, p. 472) described the wonder work of love in the following verses:

*Love is infinite ocean, on which heavens are but a flake of foam: (they are distraught) like Zulaykha in desire of a Joseph.*

*Know that the wheeling heavens are turned by waves of love: were it not for love, the world would be frozen (inanimate).*

*How would an organic thing disappear (by change) into a plant? How would vegetative things sacrifice themselves to become (endowed with) spirit?*

*How would the spirit sacrifice itself for the sake of the Breath by his waft whereof a Mary was made pregnant?*

*Each one (of them) would be as stiff and immovable as ice; how should they be flying and seeking like locusts?*

How did the universe evolve from the lower level to the higher level can clearly be seen from these following verses:

*First he (man) came into the clime of inorganic things, and from the state of inorganic things he passed into vegetable state.*

*(Many) years he lived in the vegetable state and when he passed from the vegetable state to the animal state, the vegetable state was not remembered by him at all.*

*Save only for the inclination which he has towards that (state) especially in the season of spring and sweet herbs -*

*Like the inclination of babes towards their mother; it (the babe) does not know the secret of its desire for being suckled;*

*Again the Creator, whom thou knowest, was leading him (man) from the animal (state) towards humanity.*

*Thus did he advance from clime to clime (from one world of being to another), till he has now become intelligent, wise and mighty. (Rumi 1977, vol. IV, p. 472)*

## 6.4 Rumi and Mulla Sadra

The above verse reveals to us an unusual world-view of Mawlana. Did he not say that when mineral beings died, they will gradually transform into vegetable, and vegetable into animal, and animal into human beings and so on? But Rumi did not elaborate it philosophically as to how this transformation really takes place. It seems that we have to wait several centuries later to find its philosophical explanation in Mulla Sadra's (1572–1640) teaching of trans-substantial motion (*al-ḥarakat al-jawhariyyah*). According to this teaching, any change or motion requires substantial motion. When Ibn Sina said that change can only take place at accidental categories (quality, quantity, situation and place) and allows no change at a substantial

category, Mulla Sadra said, ‘any change in the accidents of an object requires in fact a change in its substance, since accidents have no existence independent of substance’ (Nasr 1996, p. 649).

This trans-substantial change or movement, according to Sadra, is a universal phenomenon and permeates everything there is. The whole of the physical and even the psychic or the imaginal universes which extend up to the immutable or luminous archetypes is in constant motion or existence: at the cosmic, geological and biological levels, and even at the psychic and imaginal levels. There is no doubt that this view is in accordance with Mawlana’s theory that the universe has undergone a long evolutionary process and does not cease after man dies. Like Rumi, Mulla Sadra also believes that this evolutionary movement does not end at the human level, but will continue at the psychic, the imaginal, and even the archetypal levels until it reaches the Divine Presence. Describing this evolution, Sadra said, ‘All beings in this world are moving vertically as the result of trans-substantial motion until they reach the plenum of their archetypal reality. The sperm becomes a foetus and grows to the form of a baby who is then born and continues to grow from one form to another until he or she reaches full maturity and the body becomes weaker as the soul grows stronger until one dies and reaches the ‘imaginal world’ and finally the Divine Presence’ (Nasr 1996, p. 649).

With this trans-substantial motion theory, Mulla Sadra actually tells us that when this movement takes place in a certain object, the previous elements or qualities are not left behind. Instead, this movement adds to it the new elements or qualities, so that it will bring about the accumulation of qualities. In turn this accumulation of qualities will cause the transmutation of genus and species and this tells us why and how a mineral being can transmute itself into vegetable and vegetable into animal and so on. But this massive movement in the universe, according to both Rumi and Sadra, has been brought about by a fundamental and creative force, which Mawlana calls love (*‘ishq*), but no name for it is offered by Sadra.

## 6.5 Rumi and Darwin

After comparing Rumi with Mulla Sadra, it would not be complete if we do not compare him with Charles Darwin (1809–1882). Darwin is of course well known to the world for his theory of evolution. He was often mistakenly considered as the pioneer of the theory, in spite of the fact that Lamarck and surely Rumi had antedated him. Darwin, to my mind, has substantially provided Rumi’s theory, based on a mystical perception, with empirical evidence. Rumi (1977, vol. IV, p. 472) said,

*And when he passed from the vegetable state to the animal state, the vegetable state was not remembered by him at all.*

*Save only for the inclination which he has towards that (state) especially in the season of spring and sweet herbs -*

*Like the inclination of babes towards their mother; it (the babe) does not know the secret of its desire for being suckled*

With the empirical evidences supplied by Darwin, the truth of evolution as envisaged by Rumi becomes more evident, and what was in the past based only on mystical perception can now be proven empirically and scientifically. Therefore, both Rumi and Darwin have revealed to us the reality of evolution.

In spite of this positive correlation between Rumi and Darwin, their views on certain aspects of this evolution are fundamentally different. There are at least four points where we find differences. Firstly, Darwin discussed evolution only on biological levels. Therefore, the range of Rumi's evolution is wider than Darwin's, since it talks about 'evolution' not only at the physical level but also in non-physical levels.

Secondly, Darwin believed that it is the law of 'natural selection' that was responsible for biological evolution. This natural selection, considered as a dominant mechanical law, brought about gradual changes in the biological world and was especially responsible for the creation or origin of the species. It is, however, not really clear to the present author, whether this natural selection is actually 'the power' that brought about this biological evolution or it is simply a 'mechanism' through which evolution took place, while the power behind this evolution is something else, for example, the will of the organic entities to survive or in other words 'the struggle for survival'. As for Rumi, the fundamental power that was responsible for the evolution in the world is love (*'ishq*). It is love, according to him, that has caused the universe to evolve in its various levels (cosmic, geological, biological, mental and even spiritual). Rumi said, 'Love is the cause of the movement in the world of matter; earth and heavens revolve by virtue of love. It is growth in vegetable and motion in sentient beings. It is also love that gives union to the particles of matter. Also it is love that makes vegetation grow, and also love that makes an animal move and multiply' (Al-Hakim 1952, p. 144).

Thirdly, in Darwin's theory, this fundamental power is blind and random. In his view, all organic beings, including man—who surely has higher forms of life—are the product of blind chance. In Rumi's theory, however, evolution has a clear destination and will not cease to evolve at the human level, for if it so, it will mean to 'stop' but halfway. No, this universal evolution, according to Rumi, will continue to move, far beyond the human kingdom, until it reaches its goal—to unite with the Beloved God.

The last (fourth) difference is that, according to Darwin, evolution occurs only at the physical level. He even deliberately severs it from any relationship with transcendent powers or realities (such as God and angels). For him it is not God, who has caused the organic things to transmute from lower forms into higher and better ones, but natural selection. In other words, it is not God who has created the species but natural forces. According to Rumi, however, this evolution requires the existence of God, as the main condition for evolution in this world, without whom, no evolution can be conceived, for, if evolution was caused by love, love needs a beloved one, that is, God, without whom love would never have existed. God is, according to him, the efficient and also the final cause thereof. He is the origin and also the returning place for everything that exists in the universe. Therefore, com-

pared to Darwin's theory, Rumi's theory of evolution is more suitable to religious doctrines or principles.

## 6.6 Rumi and Bergson

Another figure who could appropriately be compared to Rumi is Henri Bergson (1859–1941), the French philosopher of life. Compared to Darwin, Bergson's theory of evolution has many similarities with Rumi's view. Both Rumi and Bergson firmly believed in the existence of a fundamental force in the universe. Rumi named it love (*'ishq*), while Bergson called it '*élan vital* (vital impetus)'. This impetus is described by Bergson as 'a current consciousness that had penetrated matter, given rise to living bodies and determined the course of their evolution' (Goudge 1972, p. 293). It is this impetus, according to Bergson, that was responsible for the evolution in the universe.

This evolution, according to Bergson, works creatively, not mechanistically, as was thought of by Darwin. There are many things in the biological world—such as reproductive phenomenon—which cannot be explained in a mechanical way. The emergence of many truly new things in this world strongly indicates that the evolution has been controlled or directed by a creative force, which cannot be explained mechanically. The evolution must have been creative in nature, in the sense of producing truly new things, and therefore cannot be explained by either mechanics or teleology for they allow no novelty whatsoever in this universe.

Bergson in one of his works criticised Darwin's doctrine on the purpose of evolution. According to him, Darwin failed to explain why living things did not stop evolving when they were simple and well adapted to their environment. He then asked Darwin, 'Why did the evolutionary process not stop at this stage? Why did life continue to complicate itself more and more dangerously?' (Goudge 1972, p. 292). This reveals to us that the purpose of evolution is not simply to adapt to the environment, but, as mentioned above, to penetrate the matter creatively. However, in order for evolution to be creative, Bergson rejected mechanistic and teleological explanations. Both mechanism and teleology, according to him, will never allow any notions of novelty in the biological world, hence their failure to explain biological phenomena.

But if there is no 'law' to determine the course of evolution, I am afraid that this *élan vital* will become a blind force as conceptualised once by Schopenhauer. It is, in this context, that this author sees Rumi's theory as better than that of Bergson. As a religious thinker, Rumi believed that evolution is not random and does not move blindly but moves towards a clear purpose or destination. Describing this universal evolution, Rumi (1977, vol. III, p. 219) said:

*I died to the inorganic state and became endowed with growth, and (then) I died to (vegetable) growth and attained to the animal.*

*I died from animality and became Adam (man), why then should I fear, when have I become less by dying?*

*At next remove I shall die to man, that I may soar and lift up my head amongst the angels;*

*And I must escape even from (the state of) the angels: "Everything is perishing except His face."*

*Once more I shall be sacrificed and died to (the state of) angel: I shall become that which enters not to imagination.*

*Then I shall become non-existence: non-existent saith to me, (in tone loud) as an organ: "Verily unto Him shall we return."*

Rumi's evolution is not random or blind, but it is directed to God, the absolute Perfection. Did Rumi not say that 'everything is in love with that Perfection, and hastening upward like a sapling'?

## 6.7 Human Position and Role in the Universe

In this last section are discussed first Rumi's view on the human's position in the universe and then his role as God's vicegerent (*khalīfah*).

### 6.7.1 Human Position

Man is esteemed very highly by Rumi both in relation to the universe and to God. In relation to nature, man, conceived in his truest meaning, is not only a microcosm but the macrocosm because it is for his sake that the universe was created. In one of Rumi's poems he said:

*Therefore in form thou art the microcosm, in reality thou art the macrocosm.*

*Externally the branch is the origin of the fruit; intrinsically the branch came into existence for the sake of the fruit.*

*If there had not been desire and hope for the fruit, how should the gardener have planted the root of the tree?*

*Therefore in reality the tree was born of the fruit, (even) if in appearance it (the fruit) was generated by the tree. (Rumi 1977, vol. VI, p. 249)*

In the above verses, Rumi has likened man to the fruit, for the sake of which the branches came into existence and the gardener planted the root of the tree. If there had not been the desire and hope for the fruit, how should the gardener have planted the root of the tree? The gardener referred to here is God, and 'to plant the root of the tree' refers to the creation of the world. In relation to God, the human being is His representative on earth (*khalīfat Allāh fī'l-ard*). It is for this reason that man has been given the right to manage and cultivate the earth, but only in so far as his 'theomorphic make-up' and not as the frequently rebellious person against God as represented by modern man. Man is also described as having a close relationship with nature. According to Rumi, man is the channel of God's blessing (*barakah*) to the world, i.e. through his active participation in the spiritual dimension of the world. Man is the mouth, through which the physical world breathes and lives.

### 6.7.2 *Human Role*

From this we eventually realise how crucial is the role that human beings can play, either in refining his relationship with nature or in disturbing or even destroying its equilibrium. So close is this relationship, that whatever is the human's internal condition will influence the external order of nature and tell us why when man's internal condition becomes dark and absurd, the world will change from harmony and beauty into imbalance and disorder.

In order to understand the condition of the world, we have to delve into the depth of our own selves and not just be at the rim of existence. Man who lives only on the surface of his existence can only conceive the world as something to be exploited and subdued. From this, we can understand the important role that can be played by contemplative and saintly people. They are like the torch that illuminates the world and keeps it alive. For if there exist no more contemplative and holy people like that, the world will lose its self-illuminating light and life-giving air that keeps it alive (Kartanegara 2007, p. 162).

## 6.8 Conclusion

In the view of the Sufis, the world, or in this case the earth, can never be merely an object to serve the human being. The world is a living creature capable of loving and being loved and between the two (man and nature) can emerge a mutual love and understanding. Here, we can learn a reciprocal relationship between the two. Whatever the human being does, it will be reflected on the world. Now it depends on us, whether to continue destroying the earth or creating peace and harmony on it. God has given us as His *khulafā'* the right to cultivate and manage the earth responsibly, for we are 'the masters' and at the same time also 'the caretakers' of the earth.

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# Chapter 7

## Sayyid Qutb's Understanding of the Universe as a Living and Meaningful World

İbrahim Özdemir

**Abstract** This article intends to point out some chief characteristics of Sayyid Qutb's (1906–1966) understanding of nature as a living being. Although Qutb has been considered as “one of the most influential ideologues of radical Islamism”, this article highlights for the first time a neglected dimension of his thought. When we study his Qur'anic exegeses with a critical mind and ecological reading, we discover that Qutb, especially when interpreting early chapters of the Qur'an, provides us with a vivid and meaningful understanding of the natural world. To do justice to this subject, the following questions are addressed in the case of Qutb:

- What is the universe or nature?
- Does the universe have any meaning?
- What is the meaning of the aesthetic dimension of the universe?
- Why should the universe be an orderly whole?
- Does nature have any intrinsic value independent of man?
- What is man's place in the universe?

Answering these questions in a systematic way, we argue that to consider him just as “the most influential ideologue of radical Islamism” is incomplete and misleading. When we approach his corpus of work, especially his masterpiece *In the Shade of the Qur'an* with an ecological reading, we see that he has very important insights to provide understanding of the natural world as a living and meaningful being. This new reading of Qutb presents new dimensions and raises our perception of nature within a Qur'anic context.

...they have hearts with which they cannot understand, and eyes with which they fail to see, and ears with which they fail to hear. (*al-A'raf* 7:179)

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## 7.1 Introduction

The aim of this article is to pinpoint the late Sayyid Qutb's (1906–1966) perception of the universe and nature as a living and meaningful being in the Qur'anic context. It then intends to highlight the implications of this understanding for environmental awareness and ethics for Muslim communities. When we read his seminal commentary, *Fī Ṣīlāl al-Qur'ān (In the Shade of the Qur'an, henceforth Fī Ṣīlāl or "Commentary")*, with an ecological mindset, it soon becomes clear that he had very important insights to understanding the natural world as a living and meaningful being. Wherever Qutb's comments are emphasised in this article, they are italicised. Qutb, as a result of his intellectual development and discovery of the jewels of the Qur'an, confessed his friendship with the Qur'an very eloquently:

I have reflected on, and dealt with, the Qur'anic sūrah's in this light, after having 'lived' with them and recited them over a very long period of time. I have thus been able to identify the distinctive characteristics of each. As a result, I find in the Qur'anic sūrah's a great variety resulting from different patterns, a friendliness which can be attributed to the close personal approach, and an enjoyment that is ever renewed. All of these sūrah's are friends imparting an air of friendliness, love and enjoyment. Each gives you a different set of inspirations to impress on you its uniqueness. To take a journey with a sūrah from beginning to end involves looking at a great many worlds, contemplating a large number of facts and truisms, and delving into the depths of the human soul as well as contemplating the great scenes of the universe. However, each is a special journey that is bound to give you something unique. (Qutb 2001; Commentary on *al-A'rĒf* 7:179)

Considering his intellectual development from a nationalist and secular background to Islam, Qutb regards this new phase of his life of living *In the Shade of the Qur'an* as "a great blessing, which can only be fully appreciated by those who experience it". He noted, "it is a rich experience that gives meaning to life and makes it worth living" (Qutb 2001, Introduction).

Therefore, this humble and new reading of the so-called Qutbian project will present new dimensions and raise one's perception of nature within a Qur'anic context on the one hand and provide a different portrait of Qutb on the other. However, we should begin with an anecdote about the plight of Muslims' awareness of environmental problems.

Associated Press (AP) ran a story about environmental consciousness and activism in Muslim societies in 2012. According to the story

at Friday prayers in Qatar's most popular mosque, the imam discussed the civil war in Syria, the unrest in Egypt and the UN endorsement of an independent state of Palestine. Not a word about climate change, even though the Middle Eastern nation of Qatar was hosting a UN conference where nearly 200 countries tried to forge a joint plan to fight global warming, which climate activists say is the greatest modern challenge to mankind. (Casey and Ritter 2012)

The reaction of a Muslim at the al-Khattab mosque in Doha when asked what he thought about the issue at hand was that "Unfortunately the Arab and Islamic countries have *political and economic* problems". Moreover, he argued, "Islam calls for the protection of the environment, but *the Muslim countries are mostly poor and*



*they didn't cause pollution and aren't affected by climate change*". The story concluded that although "the Qur'an is filled with more than 1,500 verses about nature and the Earth, the voice of Islamic leaders is missing from the global dialogue on warming" (Casey and Ritter 2012). Interestingly, AP contacted six mosques in the Qatari capital and "only one included an environmental message in the Friday prayers, telling those in attendance to plant trees, shun extravagance and conserve water and electricity". This was also considered an indication of Muslim imams' superficial understanding of environmental issues. To use Norwegian deep ecophilosopher Arne Naess' (1992) terminology, it was an indication of "shallow environmentalism" of imams regarding global environmental problems.

Unfortunately, many Muslim policy makers and even scientists also defend the same or similar arguments when discussing environmental protection or climate change. According to them, environmentalism is a new game of the capitalist West, which aims to prevent the development of Muslim countries. Therefore, Muslims should also use and exploit natural resources for their economic and political development.

The French philosopher Teilhard de Chardin (1881–1955) once underlined that "*the whole of life lies in the verb seeing*". In fact, the Qur'an declared from the very beginning that everything depends on human willingness and readiness to understand, to see and to hear "the message manifested within themselves and through the universe" (Commentary on *Fussilat* 41:53).

According to Qutb, "this is the final profound note" to humankind. In fact, "it is a promise by God to mankind to put before them some of the secrets in the universe and some of the secrets working within themselves" for which then, "they will be able to realize that this faith, this book and its discourse are the truth" (Ibid.). Also according to Qutb:

Islam ensures that its followers' hearts are always alert. This is an alertness generated by faith right from the moment it settles in a person's heart. It neither defies human power, nor is too hard for man to sustain. It is a question of sensitivity enhanced by a believer's bond with God and his watchfulness in all situations, guarding against sin. It is perfectly within people's power when the light of faith shines in their hearts. (Commentary on *al-Mu'minun* 23:62; Qutb 2001, vol. 12, p. 180)

Once we are ready to see the universe anew and differently the "signs are there for all to see, and they have a direct effect on the human heart". It does not require a special education or "any scientific information about them":

Their relation with man is more profound than scientific knowledge because it is based on the fact that we share with them a common origin, nature and make-up. They belong to us and we belong to them: our constituting elements, nature, law and our Maker who created us all....Therefore, the Qur'an often directs our attention to them, without delving any deeper. It only wants us *not to overlook them as a result of either long familiarity with them or other barriers*. The Qur'an removes these so as to make us alert to and interact with the messages given by this *friendly universe*. (Commentary on *Fussilat* 41:37)

However, unless humans are ready to understand, see and listen, whatever they do is fruitless. Therefore, it is pertinent to listen to Qutb in a different context and hear his deep insights regarding this *friendly universe*.

## 7.2 Qutb as Eco-thinker

It is interesting to observe that when it comes to Qutb's views on nature, the above-mentioned observation about the lack of awareness among Muslims about environmental problems is true for Qutb as well, although his *Fī Zīlāl* is full of ideas, which are enough for any scholar to be called an environmental thinker. It is interesting to see that although Qutb “had the opportunity to study the Qur'an at length and ponder over its clear and full conception of creation and existence and their purpose” (Commentary on *Fussilat* 41:37), there is almost no reference in the literature to his perception of what he called a “friendly universe” from a Qur'anic context. It seems that his ideas on the relationship between nature and human beings never attracted scholars' interests and curiosity.

In other words, how the universe and natural world are seen by him from a Qur'anic perspective never attracted politically minded Muslims and non-Muslims. Therefore, as a recent study highlights, Qutb has been “considered by both friends and foes to be [solely] a founding father of radical Sunni Islamic thought” in the twentieth century.<sup>1</sup>

Calvert, for example, presented a portrait of Qutb worthy of a psychobiography, without the excesses typical of the genre. He traced the evolution of Qutb's political thought from secular nationalism to religious fundamentalism and situated Qutb's Islamism within past and present Islamic political thought. He concluded that “scholars, journalists and other observers generally credit Sayyid Qutb with formulating the theoretical bases of Islamism in the post-colonial Sunni Muslim World” (Calvert 2013, p. 16; Abu-Rabi 1996).

According to Calvert, although “present-day Islamists read Qutb differently”, they still consider him a pioneer of political Islam. Moreover, he was presented “in the public imagination as the architect of the mind-set that inspired the September 11, 2001, hijackers” (Toth 2013, p. 3). It is obvious that religious fundamentalists—i.e. Jewish, Christian, Muslim, secular and ideological—imagined and created a different Qutb for their own political agendas. Instead of attempting to understand his intellectual formation and legacy in a holistic and systematic way, “complexities” of his thought, “handled by reduction, simplification, exaggeration, caricature, *ad hominem* attacks, and judgments of Western superiority”, discounted or dismissed “any serious, profound, and legitimate ideas” (Toth 2013, p. 3).

Although we do not intend to deny his role as “one of the twentieth century's most important figures in the field of Islamist political philosophy” (Gearon 2014), we will present a different reading of Qutb and a different picture of him, as a man of literature, solitude and, most importantly, a humble life lived in the shade of the Qur'an. Moreover, it will present his deep perception of nature, when commenting on the verses of the Qur'an as a living organism that is full of meaning that may enrich one's perception of the natural world.

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<sup>1</sup> *Foreign Affairs* journal review comment regarding Calvert's (2013) biography of Sayyid Qutb.

It is true that when reading Qutb's ideas on politics, it is not difficult to understand his overtone of political jargon. However, there is the possibility of constructing an environmental ethics based on his understanding of the Qur'anic message regarding the relationship between God, humanity and nature. If his commentary is read with an environmental mentality, there is a lot to learn from him. Moreover, Muslims if they wish can outline an environmental ethics based on his Qur'anic commentary. To understand and appreciate his perception of the universe as a living and meaningful world, the modern perception of nature will be outlined. Obviously, any thinker who wants to develop a new perception of nature as a living and meaningful entity has to challenge the prevailing modern concept of nature.

### 7.3 Modern Concept of Nature as Lifeless and Meaningless

It seems that the most serious challenge(s) in the present age, facing not only religion but all transcendental and metaphysical systems of values, springs from two sources:

- (a) The materialist-mechanistic understanding of the world, which denies every sort of transcendental value in nature
- (b) The existential approach, which denies and rejects the religious and spiritual side of ethics and moral values

As we know, Cartesian dualism formed the basis of the seventeenth-century scientific revolution. The universe, which had previously been envisaged as a living whole, was for the first time divided into matter and spirit. The most radical point of this new and modern understanding was its emphasis on matter and the material alone and its rejection of knowledge of everything spiritual and non-material. With John Locke, for example, knowledge of anything not objective was considered secondary and the product of imagination. In short, according to this modern perception: "nature is a dull affair, soundless, scentless, colorless: merely the hurrying of material, endlessly, meaninglessly" (Whitehead 1926, pp. 79–80).

This modern perception of nature as meaningless and purposeless and its resulting consequences are still prevalent among the scientific community and are even defended by well-known scientists. A typical example of this gloomy and nihilist perspective is that of Nobel physicist Steven Weinberg who presented to us in the name of science "*a purposeless and meaningless universe*" (emphasis added):

It is almost irresistible for humans to believe that we have some special relation to the universe, that human life is not just a more-or-less farcical outcome of a chain of accidents reaching back to the first three minutes, but that we were somehow built in from the beginning... It is hard to realize that this all [i.e., life on Earth] is just a tiny part of an overwhelmingly hostile universe. It is even harder to realize that this present universe has evolved from an unspeakably unfamiliar early condition, and faces a future extinction of endless cold or intolerable heat. The more the universe seems comprehensible, the more it also seems pointless. (Weinberg 1993, p. 154)

The Nobel molecular biologist Jacques Monod (1910–1976) is another influential supporter of this perspective. Needless to say, Monod's (1971) book *Chance and Necessity* powerfully influenced a generation of scientists. Monod argued forcefully and convincingly that “purpose and meaning in nature were outlaw concepts; for a scientist to believe in them was unbecoming at best and a moral failing at worst” (Dossey 2010). He confidently proclaimed that “the cornerstone of the scientific method is the systematic denial that ‘true’ knowledge can be got at by interpreting phenomena in terms of final causes—that is to say, of ‘purpose’” (Monod 1971, p. 21). As such, the “ecological crisis” is defined by leading eco-philosophers and environmentalists as a crisis of modernity (e.g. Carter 2001, p. 359).

## 7.4 Pre-Islamic Arabs and Nature

It is surprising to see the striking similarities between the pre-Islamic Arabs' view of nature as lifeless, meaningless and purposeless and the ideas put forward in the name of the so-called “scientific” world-view of modern times. However, the Qur'an from the very beginning tried to replace the pagan Arabs' perception of nature with a new and vivid understanding. As Rahman argues, nature had been regarded as “the prime miracle of God, cited untiringly in the Qur'an, due to its well-knit structure and regularity” (Rahman 1980, p. 68).

The Qur'an's insistence on the order, beauty and harmony of nature implies that there is no demarcation between what the Qur'an reveals and what nature manifests. We can see this at once if we reflect in the way that the Qur'an invites us to use our intellect and free ourselves from the boundaries and limitations of culture and tradition, by looking at everything with an observant eye in the name of God (Özdemir 2003, p. 9).

Qutb, when commenting on some early verses of the Qur'an, reached a similar conclusion. According to him, “disbelief is a thick curtain” which prevents us to see nature in its fullness. Therefore, when this “thick curtain” is dropped with the help of the Qur'an, “nature establishes its links with the Creator. The lost one is returned to the party, the plant is watered anew and the soul experiences a sweet taste that it never forgets; that is, the sweetness of faith” (Commentary on surah *an-Nisa*).

We should remember in this context, as Nasr reminds us, that

the environmental crisis has come about as a result of the applications of a materialistic and secularist science of nature and the solution to this crisis cannot obviously be found within the very paradigm that has caused it in the first place. We need another paradigm that views nature not as an ‘it,’ not as a vast mechanism devoid of life, not only as merely a source of raw materials to be exploited by man, not as a material reality devoid of innate spiritual significance, but as a sacred reality to be treated as such. (Sacred Web 2013, p. 16)

## 7.5 God as the Sole Sustainer of All Creation

Any Islamic environmental ethics must start with the concept of *Tawhīd*, which provides a comprehensive, integrated and holistic world-view that is based on the unity of Reality (Özdemir 2003). As Rosenthal and Açıkgenç argued forcefully, to understand this concept in its fullness, we need knowledge (Rosenthal 1970; Açıkgenç 2000).

Therefore, it is not difficult to understand when Qutb noted carefully that the Qur'an presented Islam as "a serious, dynamic, and pragmatic doctrine" and then as an ethical system which was "a reflection of this doctrine" and that "the entire religion hinges on the concept of the Unity of God" (Abu-Rabi 1996, p. 173). Qutb, for example, when commenting on the last part of the verse, "Lord of all the worlds" (*al-Fatihah* 1:2), underlined that this verse expresses "the belief in the absolute universal Godhead which is at the very core of the Islamic concept of God". He argued that:

God is the sole, absolute and ultimate owner with full independent authority to act in the whole cosmos. He is the overall supreme master who has created the world and continues to watch over it, take care of it, and ensure its stability and well-being. This living and dynamic relationship between the Creator and the created is the perpetual fountain of life for all creation. God has not created the world and abandoned it to its own devices. He continues to be an active living authority over His creation, giving it what it needs for its continued and meaningful life. This applies to all God's creation. (Commentary on *al-Fatihah* 1:2)

These two attributes, the Most Compassionate and the Most Merciful, in fact "encompass all meanings and aspects of mercy and compassion, and epitomize mercy as a property of God Almighty". "These two attributes define the link between the Lord as Creator and His creation" (Commentary on *al-Fatihah* 1:3). Here, Qutb establishes the Qur'anic link between humans and nature which is not utilitarian, pragmatic and instrumental. According to Qutb, "it is a link based entirely on love, peace, reassurance, and care". Moreover, it "inspires within (hu)mans a spontaneous feeling of gratitude and praise towards God" (Commentary on *al-Fatihah* 1:3).

When commenting on the verse "Extol the limitless glory of the name of your Lord, the Most High, who creates and proportions well, who determines and guides" (*al-A'la* 87:1-3), he mentioned that:

Everything God has created is well proportioned and perfected. Every creature is assigned its own role and given guidance so that it may know its role and play it. It is told the purpose of its creation, given what it needs for sustenance and guided to it. This is clearly visible in everything around us, large or small, important or trivial. For everything is well perfected and guided to fulfil the purpose of its creation. Furthermore, all things are also collectively perfected so that they may fulfil their role together. (Commentary on *al-A'la* 87:1-3)

Moreover, Qutb noted in this context that "a single atom is well balanced between its electrons and protons, to the same degree as the solar system, its sun, planets and satellites are well balanced. Each of the two knows the way it is assigned to travel

and fulfils its role. A single living cell is also perfect and well equipped to do everything it is asked to do, in the same measure as the most advanced and complex species” (Commentary on *al-A’la* 87:1–3).

Then he reminded us that, when we look at the universe with the Qur’anic perspective, we can see “this perfect balance...in every one of the countless types of creation that fill the gap between the single atom and the solar system or between the single cell and the most advanced living creature” (Commentary on *al-A’la*). What is interesting to observe is that to understand the Qur’anic message, Qutb argued, there is no need for a special education. It “is within the reach of every man in every age, regardless of his standard of education. All that is required is an open mind which contemplates and responds” (Commentary on *al-A’la*).

It is interesting to observe almost the same ideas as Iqbal, when he commented on the impact of the Qur’anic *Weltanschauung* on the first generation of the Muslim community. According to Iqbal, the main purpose of the early verses was “to awaken in man the higher consciousness of his manifold relations with God and universe” (Iqbal 1958, pp. 8–9). Qutb also noted that “the oneness of God is the quintessence of faith” and “a solid foundation for man’s moral and social systems” (Commentary on *al-Baqarah* 2:163–167). Accordingly, the One God is:

- The only deity to be adored and worshipped
- The sole source of man’s moral codes and norms
- The origin of all the laws and regulations that govern and control man’s social, political and economic life and the life of the whole cosmos

Therefore, Qutb mentioned that “this central concept of Islam is re-emphasised time after time in the Qur’an, particularly in the parts revealed in Makkah”. Therefore, the Qur’an reminds us regularly “of God’s blessings” and emphasises that “God is the only One who *creates and provides sustenance* for His creation” (Commentary on *Fatır* 35:3). Moreover, he commented that “the earth around them and the skies above them give them abundant blessings and unlimited sustenance, in *every step and at every moment*. It is God the Creator who gives all this”.

According to Qutb, “the primary, the most fundamental, and the ever-present question with which man must deal [is] the question of man’s existence in the universe, his ultimate goal, and his relationship with the universe and other creatures”. In the context of eco-thinking, “it is the question which deals with the relationship between man and the Creator of the universe and all creation” (Commentary on *al-An’am*; Qutb 2001, vol. 5, p. 1). Qutb noted that from the very beginning, “[this] part of the Qur’an explains to humans the secret of his existence and the secret of the universe surrounding him”:

- Who he is
- Where he has come from
- For what purpose and where he will go in the end
- Who brings him from non-existence into being, who takes him away and to what destiny

The early verses of the Qur'an also inform humanity about:

- The nature of the things he can touch and see
- The things which he can sense and conceive without being able to see
- Answers to his questions concerning the Originator of this universe, which is full of mysteries: Who controls it and who brings about changes?
- *How to relate to the Creator, to the physical world and to other human beings*

According to Qutb, "the full thirteen years of the Makkan period were devoted to explaining and expounding this fundamental question". This also indicates how the Qur'anic world-view influenced and changed early Muslims' perception of God, human and nature (Commentary on *al-An'am*; Qutb 2001, vol. 5, p. 1). He also noted that "this unique Qur'anic approach in addressing *the human mind and heart* tends to heighten man's feelings and emotions and make him behold and contemplate *the wonders of the Universe*". He reminds us that "familiarity may have blunted man's appreciation of these marvels, but the verses invite him to reflect on the world around, as if for the first time, *with open eyes and eager senses and a conscious heart*":

*The physical world is full of beautiful mysteries and awe-inspiring events that have captivated many an eye and fascinated many a heart.*

The world is a boundless festival of mystery, splendor and beauty. The Heavens, the Earth, the planets, the stars, the galaxies, are all floating along their decreed orbits with incredible harmony, in a vast expanse of limitless space of dizzying dimensions.

The cycle of day and night and the alternation of light and darkness, dawn and dusk, have sent a million shivers through the hearts and souls of men everywhere. For the believing heart, it is a daily marvel to behold, despite its familiarity; a constant reminder of God's magnificence and glory. (Commentary on *al-Baqarah* 2:164)

## 7.6 Nature Is Endowed with Life

In one of the early surahs, the Qur'an makes it clear that the natural world is alive just like any living creature. Qutb, on the basis of these verses, commented that although people "often overlook because of long familiarity" at the universe as *lifeless* and *meaningless*, it is "*full of meaning*" (Commentary on *al-Muddaththir* 74:32–36). Accordingly, "the sight of the moon, the departing night and shining dawn" are full of messages and inspiration for humans: "They say much to the human heart, whispering secrets and arousing deep feelings". In doing so, Qutb noted, "the Qur'an touches our innermost selves where feelings and secrets are settled" (Commentary on *al-Muddaththir* 74:32–36).

Thus, the Qur'an changes its reader's perception of the universe from the very beginning. "This change" Qutb said, "makes us ready to receive the light that shines within our hearts just to receive the light shining over the world around us" (Commentary on *al-Muddaththir* 74:32–36). It is clear that Qutb regards nature as a

book full of meaning for us. When commenting on surah *al-An'am*, for example, he made similar observations and claimed that the sūrah paints several scenes of life opening up; there are images of:

- The break of day
- The approach of night
- The bright stars
- The darkness on land and sea
- The pouring rain
- Growing vegetation
- Ripening fruits

In short, “the unity of God, the only Creator and Originator” can be observed in the book of nature “in perfect clarity” (Commentary on *al-An'am* 6:95–103). Although, Qutb mentioned that “the surah is full of different scenes and situations”, they all share one aspect in common, which is to “bring the listener to the scene to look at it carefully and to reflect on the situation described”. Moreover, “the sūrah brings the listener before the picture of ripening fruit in gardens where we see life springing up and manifesting in the colours and fruits that could only be produced by God’s hand” (Commentary on *al-An'am* 6:74–82). So, it is not difficult for a keen reader of the Qur’an and the book of nature to see the same message delivered in both simultaneously.

Meanwhile, “beyond these shining feelings and openings, the moon, the night and the dawn all refer to a great truth to which the Qur’an alerts us. They all point to God’s power of creation, His limitless wisdom and His fine coordination of his creation”. Therefore, human beings cannot live a nihilistic life in the heart of a world full of meaning and purpose. Qutb noted that this sūrah and others—such as surah 13 (Thunder)—address “the human heart, using, from start to finish, a fascinating rhythm employing various beats. It moves us into contemplation of the great universe and the numerous signs to be found in every nook and cranny. Man thus remembers God’s blessings and appreciates the grace and favors He bestows on all His creatures”. As a result, man “feels humility as he looks at the countless marvels that constitute God’s work” (Qutb 2001, Prologue to surah *Fatir*). He also recognised that there is only one truth and one law running through all existence and that this is controlled by God’s hand.

## 7.7 Every Single Thing Extols His Glory and Praise

The Qur’an in another verse declares to all humanity that “The seven heavens extol His limitless glory, as does the earth, and all who dwell in them. *Indeed every single thing extols His glory and praise, but you cannot understand their praises*” (Commentary on *Isra* 17:44). Qutb reminds us that in this verse “the whole universe, with all creatures living in it” ... “every single particle in this vast universe shares in this glorification”. According to Qutb, the scene shows the whole universe



full of life and activity, sharing in a single action, addressing God in His exalted nature in a glorification that implies submission to His will and acknowledgement of His authority over everything.

Any environmentalist who carefully reads Qutb's comments on this verse would not need further arguments to comprehend and appreciate his deep understanding of nature. According to Qutb, what the Qur'an presents to us is:

[A] powerful and majestic scene in which we see every stone, large and small, every seed and leaf, every flower and fruit, every little shoot and every tree, every insect and reptile, every animal and human being, every creature that walks the earth, swims in the water or floats in the air, in short, all creatures in the whole universe glorifying God and turning to Him in submission. (Commentary on *Isra* 17:44)

He went further and argued, "we are filled with awe as we sense that everything that comes within our vision or stays beyond it *comes alive*".

Qutb's observations, therefore, can rightly be classified as an early voice of deep ecology when he mentioned that "*whenever we stretch our hands out to touch something, and whenever we put our feet to step over something, we feel that it is alive, glorifying God*" (emphasis added). One reason, Qutb underlined, "to understand the secrets of the universe" is that the human nature, which "has a clay origin...debars them from understanding the praises of other creatures". Once "they listened with their hearts, directing them to appreciate the subtle laws that operate in the universe and make everything, large or small, turn to the Creator of all, they would have appreciated something of that praise". Moreover, "when human souls are purified and when they hearken to every *animate and inanimate object* as it addresses its glorification to God alone, they are better prepared to be in contact with the *Supreme Society*" (Commentary on *Isra* 17:44).

Here, we can consider Qutb as a pioneer of deep ecological Muslim thinking in modern times, to the disappointment of some scholars who see him solely as the ideologue of radical and political Islam. It can be agreed upon that Qutb had an immense impact on modern political Muslim minds and psyche; however, this would be a partial reading and understanding of Qutb. In fact, there is the possibility of other readings about him.

## 7.8 Nature as Muslim

The nature has been created by God and is a sign of His existence leads to the Qur'anic idea just mentioned that all nature is "Muslim", for the whole of nature works according to divine laws—the so-called natural laws—and according to the way God designed and created it. The Qur'an, therefore, applies the term Islam ("submission") to the entire universe insofar as it (ineluctably) obeys God's law. Working according to God's laws, nature submits itself to God's will. As a result of its position, nature does not and cannot disobey God's commands and cannot violate its own laws (Commentary on *al-Hajj* 22:18; see Rahman 1980, pp. 45–47).

When commenting on the same verse, Qutb made the following observations:

When we reflect on this verse we find countless creatures, some of which we know and some we do not; and we glance at an infinite number of worlds, many of which we do not begin to know; as also an endless variety of mountains, trees and beasts that live on earth, man's abode. All these, without exception, join a single procession that prostrates itself in humble submission to God, addressing its worship, in perfect harmony, to Him alone. And out of all these creatures, humans alone have a special case, as people diverge: "a great number of human beings [bow down in worship], but a great number also will inevitably have to suffer punishment," because of their rejection of the truth. Thus, man stands out on his own, unique in that great, harmonious procession. (Commentary on *al-Hajj* 22:18)

As it seems, when commenting on this verse, Qutb follows the Qur'anic spirit and considers the whole creation as Muslim. The psychological implication of this perception should be evident to environmentalists (see also *Fussilat* 41:11).

## 7.9 Qutb and Animals

When we read Qutb's comments about verses regarding animals, we once more observe that animals are not spiritless automatons as Cartesian philosophy presented to us. When commenting on the verse "He is the One *who creates and proportions well, who determines and guides*", Qutb underlined the role of animals in the ecosystem (Commentary on *al-A'la* 87:2-3) and presented long quotations from western scientists to support his argument. According to Qutb, "the surah mentions some of the creation God has made subservient to man, beginning with cattle" (*an-Nahl* 16:5-8). Although cattle are mentioned here, Qutb argued that "the better known cattle in Arabia at the time were camels, cows, sheep and goats" (Commentary on *an-Nahl* 16:5-8).

What is interesting here is the relationship between animals and humans. Here and in many other places, when the Qur'an refers to animals as an "aspect of God's blessings", it refers to the practical needs that animals fulfil in human life. Cattle, for example, "give warmth as we use their hide, wool and hair. These have even further benefits. We also obtain milk and meat from cattle. We are reminded that cattle provide food for people and carry their loads when they travel. Without cattle, people would until recently have found great difficulty in reaching their destination" (Commentary on *an-Nahl* 16:5-8). Qutb also underlined the aesthetic dimension of the human-animal relationship. According to him, "we enjoy their beauty, particularly when we drive them home in the evening and when we take them to pasture in the morning. Just looking at them moving along, strong and full of vigour, gives us pleasure". Qutb, as a village boy of Egypt, is fully aware of the fact that "rural people are better able than town dwellers to appreciate the meanings to which these verses refer" (Commentary on *an-Nahl* 16:5-8). Therefore, his comments on animals are eye opening.

Moreover, Qutb noted that "a particularly interesting point in the Islamic outlook of life" is *beauty in creation*. Mentioning the aesthetic dimension of creation is

important. It seems that Qutb, on the Qur'anic basis, is not satisfied with the *instrumental and utilitarian* dimension of creation and animals:

God's blessing does not merely satisfy essential needs, such as food, drink and mounts. It also satisfies healthy desires beyond basic needs. Here we find satisfaction of the sense that enjoys beauty and seeks pleasure, and also satisfies human feelings that are more sublime than animal desires and needs. (Commentary on *an-Nahl* 16:8)

So, as this beauty was created by God, it is an obligation for humans to appreciate it and also preserve it with a spirit of sincere faith. In other words, it is a sacred duty for a sincere Muslim to respect, preserve and sustain animals and plants. Thus, "the Qur'an prepares people's minds and hearts to receive whatever God creates and science discovers or produces in the future" (Commentary on *an-Nahl* 16:5–8).

Qutb also noted the status of plants in the Qur'an when commenting on the verses "who brings forth the pasturage, then turns it to withered grass" (*al-A'la* 87:4–5). The pasturage, as used here, refers to all plants. The term then has a much wider sense than the familiar pastures where cattle feed. God has created this planet and provided enough food to nourish every single living creature which walks, swims, flies or hides itself underground. In short, the plants and pasturage "serves a purpose according to the elaborate planning of the One who creates, proportions, determines and guides" (Commentary on *an-Nahl* 16:8).

## 7.10 Water: The Source of Life

When Qutb commented on verses about water, it is not difficult to see his vision of the world as a home, in fact as a heavenly palace prepared for humans, animals and all creatures. However, human beings are the key as they are responsible for the whole creation. In a poetic style Qutb reminded us that:

Water pours down from the sky in accordance with laws that God has placed in nature and set into operation. It is these laws that control the running of such water and bring about its outcome in accordance with God's will. Indeed, He initiates every movement and determines every result by a special act of will. (Commentary on *an-Nahl* 16:10)

Although we drink water for the sake of our life and use it within our civilisation, as masterfully mention by Jared Diamond in his seminal book, the whole creation also needs water for existence and sustenance of its life (Diamond 2005).

When commenting on the verse "We send down water from the skies in accordance with a set measure, and We cause it to lodge in the earth; and We are most certainly able to take it all away" (*al-Mu'minun* 23:18), he underlined that there is "a direct link between those seven orbits or bodies and the earth". He believed that "water falls from the sky, and has a direct link with those bodies". It is not difficult for Qutb to see "the perfect order controlling the universe that allows water to fall from the sky and settle into the earth" (Commentary on *al-Mu'minun*; vol. 12, pp. 158–159).

Here, we see in the Qur'anic usage of water that the whole creation is interconnected and interdependent. Qutb, commenting on similar verses on water, underlined the Qur'anic perception of the whole universe as a meaningful book. The outline of his comments is as follows:

- There is certainly a sign in the way God has designed the universe and sets its laws.
- They fit human life.
- Man would not have been able to survive on this planet had the laws of nature been unsuitable for his nature and needs.
- Man is placed on the earth and this has not come about by blind coincidence.
- Nor is it a matter of coincidence that proportions and relationships between our planet and other planets and stars are as they are.
- Climatic conditions are so suitable to support human life and satisfy man's needs and desires.

According to Qutb, when people look through the world with the Qur'anic lens, they will see and understand that:

- There is elaborate and wise planning in the universe.
- A natural phenomenon such as rain and its effects of initiating life and helping plants and trees to grow and yield their fruit links to the higher laws of existence and evidence pointing to the Creator who has no partners.
- Everything is part of His planning and under His management.

However, “the careless see such phenomena every morning and every evening, winter and summer, but it stirs nothing in their minds. They do not feel any urge to try to identify the One who has designed this unique and remarkable system” (Commentary on *an-Nahl* 16:10).

## 7.11 Conclusion

Although Qutb is considered and portrayed as the ideologue of political, radical and fundamentalist Islam, this is only a partial reading of his ideas. When we study him in a holistic and critical way, we discover that he offers us a new concept of nature in light of the Qur'an. As Qutb's understanding of the universe and nature is based on the Qur'an, there is the possibility of developing a Qur'anic environmental ethics from his ideas. In his seminal and groundbreaking commentary, *Fī Zilāl*, he presented the universe as created by God with a particular order, balance, measure, beauty and aesthetic structure. Therefore, there are certain aims in the creation of all living beings. The purpose of the universe's creation is not solely anthropocentric. For man to be able to live in peace, happiness and affluence, he has to recognise his Maker, adhere to Him and abide by the rules He has laid down in the Qur'an and also in the book of the universe.

When Qutb commented on one of the early surahs (*al-A'la*), he in fact summarised the Qur'anic world-view of the universe and humankind. He noted that this surah makes it very clear that:

- Everything God has created is *well proportioned and perfected*.
- *Every creature is assigned its own role and given guidance* so that it may know and play its role and know the purpose of its creation and is given what it needs for sustenance. This is *clearly visible in everything around us, large or small, important or trivial*, which is guided to fulfil the purpose of its creation.
- Further, *all things are also collectively perfected so that they may fulfil their role together* (Commentary on *al-A'la* 87:1–5).

When commenting on surah *al-An'am*, he underlined that

the surah addresses man's heart and mind, *pointing out the evidence derived from creation and from life*, for man is able to *see such evidence in the world around him and within himself*. It is an address which moves away from theology and philosophy in order to awaken human nature, as it portrays the movement of creation according to a deliberate scheme and in a manner that states facts without indulging in argumentation. The creation of the heavens and the earth, their organization according to a clear system, and the creation of life—the most important aspect of which is human life—and its movement along its definite course, put human nature face to face with the truth and strongly reassure it of God's oneness.

So, what human beings need to do is “shake off familiarity and apathy and look afresh at the world around with a discerning eye and an enlightened heart. He should study every movement, scrutinize every phenomenon, and probe all secrets and mysteries, and let his ingenuity and imagination be fired so that he can grasp the splendour of the universe and the brilliance of its Maker”. As Al-Saud (2005, p. 101) noted, “Qutb seeks to de-construct homogenous tomes of thought that encapsulate the dynamics of society and *encourage individual awareness as the only introduction to revival*”.

Qutb reminded us that “such refined awareness, sensitivity, and appreciation of the beauty, balance, and perfection of the universe are derived from true faith”. He argued that “faith gives the believer a new insight into the world around him and a new understanding of beauty, and turns life into one continuous celebration of the creation and glory of God”. While investigating the meaning of the universe, Qutb set out the meaning of man and his place in the universe. Man's chief duty and the aim of his life is not to live as he likes, unrestrained by moral scruples, but to study in the light of the Qur'an and the book of the universe, the latter of which was created from top to bottom with instances of wisdom and is as though it is an embodiment of the Qur'an.

So, if we cannot observe environmental awareness in the Muslim world and lack of interest in the environmental problems and how to solve them, there is a problem in our understanding of the spirit of the Qur'an. Therefore, we assert that Qutb can help us to develop a spirit of environmental awareness in the twenty-first century to address and challenge the environmental problems.

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## Chapter 8

# The New Approach in Western Science Towards Understanding the Nature of Life and Mind in Terrence Deacon's 'Incomplete Nature': An Analysis from Islamic Perspectives

Ahmad Badri Abdullah and Daud Abdul-Fattah Batchelor

**Abstract** Current developments in the scientific discourse have given rise to astringent critics of modern science especially on its reductionist approach. Among others, the seminal work of Terrence Deacon entitled *Incomplete Nature: How Mind Emerged from Matter* stands out. This is evident with a number of reviews that provide commentaries. With his encyclopaedic scientific knowledge including classical mechanics, thermodynamics, statistical physics, quantum mechanics, genetics, neuroscience and linguistics, Deacon launches his strong critiques on the modern reductive science, which has failed to elucidate the phenomena of life, sentience, mind, purpose, meaning and values. It is highly significant that his analyses suggest in their end conclusions that life forms trend towards a planned endpoint or direction (teleodynamics), which is in conformity with Islamic perspectives on life and creation. This article attempts to analyse his critiques of modern science by referring to Deacon's own selected themes encompassing the ententional process, constraints, absentials, emergent process and his alternative to duality within the purviews of al-Qur'an, al-Sunnah, as well as classical and contemporary Muslim scholars. Moreover, it is proposed that such an assessment might be deemed as a stepping stone in the pursuit of integration between the physical and biological sciences with those of the humanities, philosophy and even religious traditions, so as to offer an Islamic alternative for the holistic understanding of the universe and its creation.

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## 8.1 Introduction

New developments in scientific debates exhibit a number of critiques towards the modern sciences. With the emergence of new trends viewing the nature of the universe as a unified system, modern science seems to be losing ground to more complex and holistic approaches. The salient feature of the modern sciences – upon which criticism is often launched – is the abandonment of the teleological dimension, the idea that the physical systems are guided by or drawn towards a final goal of the universe. This conception has been replaced by formulated laws of nature, postulated on a mathematical basis from mechanical observations. This conception was strengthened through a dualistic distinction between mind and body, initially proposed by Descartes: the body is deemed as an objective element belonging to the physical world, whereas the mind is regarded as a subjective element which belongs to the spiritual domain. This very notion of duality in modern science is also an important characteristic which attracts disparagements as it is deemed the primary factor for the exclusion of values and religious guidance from the realm of scientific thought.

Among others, within the trend of critiques of modern science, the proposal by Deacon in his seminal work, *Incomplete Nature: How Mind Emerges from Matter*, stands out. In his work, Deacon attempts to integrate the physical sciences, biological sciences, social sciences, humanities and philosophy in the pursuit of understanding the vital concept of life and mind as well as their nature. For instance, he suggests that biology – despite providing perspectives on the physical and chemical aspects of nature – should also strive towards being a semiotic form of knowledge in which values are identified as an imperative element within living systems. Daniel Dennett (2013, p. 321) claimed that Deacon is the latest as well as the best participant in the conflict that has been going on since the advent of Descartes' mind and body dualism in the seventeenth century.

This article offers an analysis of Deacon's critique of the modern sciences and his proposals, in the light of the principles of Islamic science, taken from the implications of Qur'anic verses and prophetic traditions, as well as some explications from Muslim scholars and scientists. Even though Deacon's thesis is not in total conformity with the principles of Islamic science, it is argued that this attempt could provide a space for an extended dialogue between Islamic civilisation and its Western counterpart, with its approach towards the reality of man and the universe. This may then contribute to easing the dissenting relationship between the two traditions, owing to shared concerns with regard to scientific thought and its epistemologies.

## 8.2 Brief Sketch of Deacon's Thesis

Deacon's proposal essentially revolves around three important concepts: intentional, constraints and absentials. By deploying such concepts, Deacon develops a totally fresh approach towards the concept of life and its nature and by which he



posits the imperative roles of value, purpose, meaning and sentience within the ambit of physical phenomena. Moreover, Deacon also proposes the emergence processes of life that constitute thermodynamics, morphodynamics and teleodynamics. These terms are used in a special way and thus merit some clarification on their meanings as intended by Deacon in his work.

### ***8.2.1 Notions of Ententional, Constraints and Absentials in the Phenomenon of Life***

Deacon described the notion of an ‘ententional’ as imperative attributes of living things that are not found in inanimate matter, and it is considered as also being the primary characteristic of the concept of ‘self’. This concept encompasses several other derivative elements such as self-maintenance, self-preservation, purpose, goal orientedness, end directedness, function, reproduction, evolution, adaptation, value and meaning. It includes measures taken by the living organism to preserve itself and propagate its organisation. Deacon illustrated this phenomenon by stating that:

Ententional phenomena include functions that have satisfaction conditions, adaptations that have environmental correlates, thoughts that have contents, purposes that have goals, subjective experiences that have self/other perspectives, and values that have a self that is benefited or harmed. (Deacon 2013, p. 27)

Furthermore, Deacon contends that the crux of the problems in the natural sciences is their oversight of the ententional phenomena as processes that can be found in any physical matter or material changes. Despite this, in reality, the world is filled with physical consequences brought about by ententional forces. Ententional phenomena for Deacon, such as a biological adaptation like flight, a mental experience like pain, an abstract convention like a grammatical function or a value assessment like a benefit, can all be embodied in highly diverse kinds of physical-chemical processes and substrates. To explicate the nature of life, Deacon correlates the notion of ententional to two other concepts, namely, constraints and absentials.

The concept of ‘constraints’ is central to Deacon’s elucidation of biotic systems; it is essential in a living organism in order to convert energy from the environment into the necessary processes for the sake of propagation of its organisation, e.g. its metabolism, growth, reproduction and the like. In other words, a constraint connotes a property of being restricted irrespective of why it is being restricted (Deacon 2013, p. 193). Rather than framing the problem of life and mind in terms of mechanisms, Deacon suggests that they should be perceived in terms of constraints. The mechanistic approach is determinable, whereas constraints are simply anything that reduces the number of possibilities and degrees of freedom. Moreover, there is also a close relation between the concept of constraints and information, which will be discussed later.

For Deacon, phenomena such as function, purpose and value are in some way incomplete, owing to the fact that they cannot be related to physical matter and cannot be explained in physical terms nor linked to physical processes. Therefore, he deems that there is something missing in the physical world, which he termed 'absentials' or 'absential features', each of which is a defining property of life and mind. Aside from these, there is another type of absence for Deacon, namely, the absence of subjective matters from scientific consideration such as beauty, ethics, values and consciousness. Deacon contends that modern scientific theories have failed to explain important aspects such as the place of meaning, purpose and value in the physical world (Deacon 2013, p. 22). Logan argues that Deacon's concept of absentials is identical to McLuhan's 'figure/background reversal' concept whereby the focus is placed on the interaction between matter rather than their physical or chemical features (Logan 2012, p. 293). Moreover, Deacon also suggests that the organisation of matter should be viewed in terms of constraints or absences. For him, the emerging constraints are neither material nor dynamical elements, and they are not the descriptive attributes of material processes; they are in fact the missing elements within the purview of modern science. In other words, within a systemic perspective, absence is in fact a constraint by which each part's infinite number of possibilities is limited to the function that contributes to the whole.

In Deacon's project, since constraints are responsible for giving rise to something that is absent, information is therefore a type of absence. Deacon asserts that: What matters in the case of information, and produces its distinctive physical consequences, is a relationship to something not there. Information is the archetypical absential concept (Deacon 2013, p. 373).

It is thus interesting to note Deacon's argument on the relation between the organisation of matter and the concept of information. He argues that the natural state of matter is maximum randomness according to the second law of thermodynamics. On the other hand, organisation is a result of constraints that prevent the random state of those matters; thus, it is in fact a form of information. An elementary example of this relation could be found in Deacon's elucidation on DNA as follows:

This retained foundation of reproduced constraints is effectively the precursor to genetic information (or rather the general property that genetic information also exhibits)... Whether it is embodied in specific information-bearing molecules (as in DNA) or in merely molecular interaction constraints of a simple autogenic process, information is ultimately constituted by preserved constraints. (Deacon 2013, pp. 317–318)

## 8.2.2 *The Emergence of Life and Mind*

The notion of emergence was popular in the early decades of the twentieth century and is currently re-emerging as the central concept in metaphysics and the philosophy of the mind. One of the reasons of the re-emergence of this philosophical

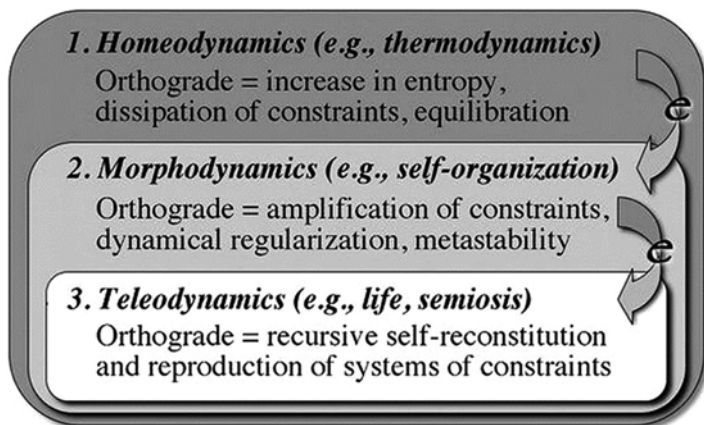
doctrine is the collapse of the positivistic reductionism approach in science. British emergentists such as John Stuart Mill, C.D. Broad, and Samuel Alexander are among the first who worked out a comprehensive picture of this theory (O'Connor and Wong 2012). Among the early exponents of this theory is John Stuart Mill in his book entitled *The System of Logic* where he contended that:

All organised bodies are composed of parts, similar to those composing inorganic nature, and which have been even themselves existed in an organic state; but the phenomenon of life, which results from the juxtaposition of those parts in a certain manner, bears no analogy to any of the effects which would be produced by the action of the component substance considered as mere physical agents...it is certain that no mere summing up of the separate actions of those elements will ever amount to the action of the living body itself. (Mill 1889, p. 242)

The essence of emergent properties is captured best in psychologist Wundt's famous quote, 'The whole is greater than the sum of its parts' (Easterling and Kok 2002, p. 236). It suggests that the interaction of patterns and processes at a smaller scale produces a fundamentally new organisation at a larger scale. Currently, this theory is adopted in several sciences including physics, chemistry, atmospheric sciences, economics, psychology, political sciences and ecosystem ecology. In this respect, emergent properties are often used to distinguish a complex system from one that is merely complicated. Such a property can also be defined as unexpected behaviour, which stems from interrelated interactions between components of a system as well as its environment.

Deacon used the concept of 'emergence' in the pursuit of explaining the phenomena of life, which he organised in three distinct steps of emergence, namely, thermodynamics, morphodynamics and teleodynamics (see Fig. 8.1). 'Thermodynamics' signifies the chaotic conditions of the original elements that will finally merge to develop a living organism, for instance, atoms and molecules of water, methane, ammonia and carbon dioxide that randomly move from thermal fluctuations in a primordial soup (Carr 2013, p. 232).

Meanwhile, 'morphodynamics' connotes the process of self-organisation of a living organism. According to Deacon, life depends on the extraction of energy from the environment by making use of constraints that are built up by morphodynamic actions so as to use that energy for metabolism and reproduction. Therefore, there is a close relation between life, constraints and this self-organisational process. This is also owing to the two characteristics of living organisms, namely, the engagement in the process of maintaining order and its constant throughput of energy and materials. In the former, their chemical and physical structures are organised to maintain themselves by the continuous production of the structures, while in the latter, the energy from the environment is directed to execute the process of metabolism, development, repair and immunisation. For Deacon, with these two characteristics, life manages to operate against the degrading propensity of the second law of thermodynamics (Deacon 2013, p. 250). As an elementary example of this, Deacon provided some empirically testable molecular models in which the thermodynamic process is in operation; among them is the self-assembly of cellular membranes.



**Fig. 8.1** An illustration of the nested hierarchy of the three emergent levels of dynamics, their typical examples and their emergence (*e*) from subvenient dynamical processes (From Deacon 2013, Fig. 9.1)

Furthermore, the other process called ‘teleodynamics’ is the key new idea in Deacon’s work that is considered a defining property of a living organism. Through this concept, organisms are defined as selves that act to pursue their own self-interest. For Deacon, his definition of teleodynamics contends it is not just a dynamical organisation for the pursuit of an organism’s continuance, but rather it includes a representation of its own dynamic final cause tendency. Due to the fact that organisms are teleodynamic systems, they do not just react mechanically towards perturbation; rather, they are organised to initiate change in their internal deficit. For instance, the essential purpose of a cell is to consume its food, to avoid its absence (from being eaten) and to reproduce. Therefore, the behaviour and development of such a cell are within the constraint of its absential property. Deacon thus claims the self-referential of teleodynamics is the source of a special emergent form of self that will finally bring about a non-material conception of the organism and the neurological self and one which is embodied by dynamical constraints (Deacon 2013, p. 487). He also contended that:

So surprisingly, this view of self shows it to be as non-material as Descartes might have imagined, and yet physical, extended, and relevant to the causal scheme of things as is the hole at the hub of the wheel. (Deacon 2013, p. 484)

Furthermore, Deacon elucidated that teleodynamism depends on morphodynamics, while morphodynamics depends on thermodynamics. These three processes develop a three-nested hierarchy of modes of dynamics whereby the second law of thermodynamics is linked to the teleodynamics of life and mind (Deacon 2013, p. 487). By referring to this three-tier dynamical order, Deacon attempts to offer a perspective on the problem of consciousness by mentioning that:

Contrary to many neuroscience colleagues, I believe that these phenomena are entirely available to scientific investigation once we discover how they emerge from lower-level

teleodynamic, morphodynamic and thermodynamic processes...With the realisation that specific absent tendencies – dynamical constraints – are critically relevant to the causal fabric of the world, and are the crucial mediators of spontaneous change, *we are able to stop searching for consciousness ‘in’ the brain or ‘made of’ neural signals* (emphasis provided). (Deacon 2013, p. 534)

Even though Deacon does not solve the problem of consciousness in his work, he has identified what seems to be a feasible direction to resolve this mysterious aspect of the human mind.

### 8.3 Deacon’s Alternative to Mind-Body Dualism

For Deacon, the very notion of duality is a cunning strategy to avoid the question on how inanimate matter becomes alive. Hence, Deacon illustrated his thesis by stressing that instead of trying to eliminate the ententional properties from science, he suggested that they should be understood particularly on how they manage to come into existence. He reaffirmed his stance on the notion of dualism by mentioning that:

But we cannot stop at this dualistic appearance anymore than at a dualistic metaphysic, because in all its cryptic forms, dualism is a halting move. It leaves all critical questions unasked. (Deacon 2013, p. 265)

Deacon criticised Cartesian dualism, especially its notion of substance dualism whereby Descartes differentiates between the physical and mental. While the former constitutes the physical aspect of the material world, the latter is a dimension in which Descartes included God and the spirit (*rūh*). Moreover, despite Descartes’ argument that minds are intimately united with bodies, he claimed that the body does not determine the self. The substance of a self consists only in an organism being a ‘thinking thing’. Despite this, Descartes actually failed to propose a clear description on the form of relations between the spirit and body as he claimed that the mind can have no direct effects from the body. In other words, Descartes and his predecessors failed to elucidate the essential relation between the body and spirit.

Deacon, on the other hand, is of the view that there is just one type of substance with two types of properties existing therein, namely, physical and ententional. The physical properties are described by thermodynamics and morphodynamics, whereas the ententional properties are attributable to the teleodynamics. Logan contended that Deacon attempts to provide an understanding for the way in which a physical substance manages to give rise to multiple properties, consisting of the physical that encompasses brains, bodies and their physical activities as well as the ententional, which includes life forces, sentience and the mind. Furthermore, Logan also suggested that instead of duality, Deacon has in fact developed a property triality whereby three levels of interaction between matters, namely, thermodynamics, morphodynamics and teleodynamics, exist since they give rise to different sets of properties or behaviours. This also signifies that a supervenient system owns a prop-

erty not possessed by its parts and matter could operate in distinct ways contingent upon the platform in which it resides. These properties are not intrinsic to matter, but rather the results of the non-linear interactions between them as components of a supervenient system (Cf. Logan 2012, p. 296).

## 8.4 Analysis of Deacon's Thesis from an Islamic Perspective

Within the ambit of the epistemological framework of Islamic science, immaterial entities can never be viewed in separation of their material counterparts, and it is even considered as an integral part of them. Given this, Mulyadhi Kartanegara contended that these immaterial entities should be placed in a hierarchical order culminating in the first cause, which is God (Kartanegara 2009, p. 161). Hence, the studies of extra-physical topics, such as cosmology and metaphysics, are imperative since otherwise the explication of the physical will not be understood properly or in Deacon's term are incomplete. These immaterial fields such as metaphysics should also be considered as forms of 'absence' in the modern reductive sciences along with other absential features.

Deacon's postulation on the imperative roles of some absential features, such as function, values, ethics and consciousness in the realm of the physical world, is indeed a commendable initiative since it opens the possibilities of the influence of extra-material elements on the material elements. Unfortunately, Deacon limited himself to systematic terrestrial limitations – which he described as ententionals and constraints – such as information, function, end directedness and consciousness as the forces that essentially leave effects on the material elements. Muslim scholars in contrast have propounded the pivotal role of spiritual agencies as the imperative drive of human life.

Rumi, for example, had a holistic concept of the created universe, which appears to correspond to the concept of absentials of Deacon. Rumi viewed Earth as a living creature and love (*ishq*) as the fundamental force that brought the world into life, capable of loving and being loved. This love caused the universe and its elements to move and develop in a gradual manner, which can be called 'evolution'. As Kartanegara stated:

It was the desire of the universe, the lover (*āshiq*) to be close to unite with God, the beloved (*mashuq*) that first brought about the evolutionary movement in the universe at its different levels; cosmic, geological, and biological, even mental and spiritual. Why does the universe long for God? This is because there was a desire or love in everything to be perfect. Mawlana says, "Everything is in love with the Perfection and hastens upwards like a sapling." Since this Perfection is but God himself, then everything in this world struggles to approach Him, the Perfect One. Therefore, it was the desire to be perfect (like God) that was responsible for the evolutionary movement in the universe. ... The vertical movement of the universe [upwards towards Allah] is beautifully described by Rumi as that of 'flying and searching locusts' for lights.... (Kartanegara 2009, p. 161)

Describing this evolution, Mulla Sadra wrote:

All beings in this world are moving vertically as the result of trans-substantial motion until they reach the plenum of their archetypal reality. The sperm becomes a foetus and grows to the form of a baby who is then born and continued to grow from one form to another until he or she reaches full maturity and the body becomes weaker as the soul grows stronger until one dies and reaches the “imaginal world” and finally the Divine Presence. (Sadra 1981, pp. 131–132)

With this trans-substantial motion theory, the Persian scholar, Mulla Sadra, actually tells us that when this movement takes place in a certain object, the previous elements or qualities are not left behind. Instead, this movement adds to it the new elements or qualities, so that it will bring about an accumulation of qualities. In turn, this accumulation of qualities will cause the transmutation of genus and species, and this tells us why and how a mineral being can transmute itself into vegetable and from vegetable into animal and so on. However, this massive movement in the universe, according to both Rumi and Sadra, has been brought about by a fundamental and creative force, which Mawlana calls love (*‘ishq*) (Kartanegara 2009, p. 6).

Some similarity is noted between Rumi’s approaches and the view of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881–1955), a French Jesuit palaeontologist. His postulation, as described by Nidhal Guessoum, is as follows:

Teilhard was teleological through and through. He believed in ‘orthogenesis’, the idea that evolution unfolds in an upward, directional and purposeful way. In fact, he did not see biological evolution as limited to nature on earth but rather as a cosmic phenomenon, which englobes the earth itself, the solar system, and the universe at large, until a final Omega Point where complexity and conscious[ness] reach maximum levels and so the whole universe becomes conscious of itself and thus transcendent. (Guessoum 2011, pp. 296–297)

Furthermore, Deacon’s theory of life, namely, the emergence of the three-nested hierarchy of thermodynamics, morphodynamics and teleodynamics, might perhaps be suitable to describe the creation of all living species including human beings. Islamic sources have clearly postulated that the spirit (*rūh*) is infused into the human embryo at a specific designated time. On the authority of Abu ‘Abd al-Rahman ‘Abdullah ibn Mas’ud: The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) narrated:

Verily the creation of each one of you is brought together in his mother’s womb for forty days in the form of a *nutfah* (a drop), then he becomes an *‘alaqah* (clot of blood) for a like period, then a *mudghah* (morsel of flesh) for a like period, *then there is sent to him the angel who blows his soul into him* and who is commanded with four matters: to write down his rizq (sustenance), his life span, his actions, and whether he will be happy or unhappy (i.e. whether or not he will enter Paradise).<sup>1</sup>

This also goes hand in hand with what Allah revealed regarding this matter:

And verily We did create man from a quintessence (of clay). Then We placed him (as a drop of sperm) in a place of rest, firmly fixed. Then We made the sperm into a clot of congealed blood. Then of that clot We made a (fetus) lump. Then We made out of that lump bones and

<sup>1</sup> Reported by al-Bukhari, Book *Bad’u al-Khalq*, Chapter *Zikr al-Mala’ikah*, no. 3208, and Muslim, Book *Al-Qadr*, Chapter *Kaifiyah Khalq Al-Adami*, no. 2634.

clothed the bones with flesh. Then We developed out of it another creature (by breathing life into it). So blessed be Allah, the most marvelous Creator. (Q. *al Mu'minun* 23:12–14)

Therefore, according to an Islamic point of view, human beings are a special species as they are ultimately granted a spiritual force that governs the physical and intellectual dimension of their being. As such, there is another hierarchy of emergent properties within the life of humans that should be put into the account of scientific discoveries, namely, the spiritual hierarchy, and the initial advent of their life is essentially different from the other creations.

Furthermore, the contemporary Christian philosopher of science, Philip Clayton, in his *Mind and Emergence*, added to the well-accepted fourfold activity of physical, biological, psychological and cultural levels of living beings, a fifth emergent level of transcendent spirituality, which in a systems approach emerges from mental (cultural) activity (Clayton 2004, p. 34). Mark Graves in his commentary suggested, 'the level may include what Samuel Alexander calls the emergence of deity' (Graves 2014, p. 3). Clayton, in his later book, *Religion and Science*, commented (indirectly) that 'We do not need to postulate the existence of an invisible, immaterial soul' and elaborated on this view:

Emergent complexity in the natural world produces some amazing qualities. Gradually an animal evolved that is concerned with value, responsibility, truth, and even with her (real or imagined) relationship to the Ultimate. No natural laws are broken when one affirms that such qualities emerge naturally, and no occult entities such as souls or spirits need to be affirmed. Human persons, and the webs of value and meaning that they inhabit, are more than just a set of neural firings; they are emergent phenomena within the natural world. (Clayton 2004, p. 110)

In contrast, the present writers believed that 'high-level language'<sup>2</sup> and the inculcation of the *rūḥ* are separate from 'naturally emergent systems'. 'High-level language' and *rūḥ* are related since the former allows appreciation of the Divine and the immense wonders within Allah's creation of the universe. 'Naturally emergent systems' cannot account for 'high-level language' and *rūḥ*, and thus there is a duality in the make-up of the human being. Therefore, 'naturally emergent systems' are insufficient for the pinnacle of living systems – man – to truly understand God's existence properly as demonstrated by Prophet Ibrahim's (on whom be peace) inability to truly comprehend what he should worship<sup>3</sup> until God Himself showed him. At this point, his *rūḥ* and 'high-level language' drew him to the grand solution – to worship the one God. Without *rūḥ* and 'high-level language', he would have been lost, even though he had *ishq* (love) – as other creations – for his Creator.

While Descartes believed in the separation of the body and mind (i.e. cognitive ability), Muslims can believe that body and mind are emergent properties and are thus unified. However, Muslims do believe in a form of duality, which represents the

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<sup>2</sup>High-level language means a language that can effectively discuss and explain the unseen and the necessary path for human beings to draw closer to Allah Ta'ala; the concept of resurrection and the next world, of angels and jinn and of the role of prophets; the necessity for following God's Law; the Shari'ah; etc.

<sup>3</sup>See Q. 6:76–79.



*rūh* (and ‘high-level language’), which draws human beings very effectively towards the Creator, in a manner which did not exist (in animals, for instance) previously. The *rūh* (spirit) inspires the *nafs* (self) towards Allah – it has an angelic quality. If the *nafs* (self) follows this inspiration and reforms itself in line with the *rūh* (spirit), it will be successful; otherwise, if it ignores the *rūh* (spirit), it fails.

#### ***8.4.1 Analysis of Deacon’s Approach in Light of Iqbal’s Ideas on Life, Mind and Emergence***

Among others, Iqbal in his seminal work, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, deals intensively with the question of life and mind from both scientific and religious points of view. Therefore, it is a feasible comparison to Deacon’s elucidation shedding some light on those phenomena from the purview of Islamic science.

Iqbal discussed on the matter of life and mind consecutively as he deemed both of them as being inseparable from one another. Consciousness for Iqbal is the purely spiritual principle of life; it is not in fact a substance, rather an organising principle or modes of behaviour that stand at odds from a mechanistic view of matter. Interestingly, in this part of his discussion, Iqbal expressed his stand on the nature of consciousness which is antithetical to that of Deacon whereby he disagreed on the assertion that mind is a by-product of matter. Iqbal contended that:

To describe it as an epi-phenomenon of the processes of matter is to deny it as an independent activity, and to deny it as an independent activity is to deny the validity of all knowledge which is only a systematised expression of consciousness. (Iqbal 1971, p. 41)

Iqbal stressed on the compartmental character of the natural sciences and their limited and relative application to certain levels of experience. As an elementary instance of this, he explained that the notion of cause that is generally regarded as an antecedent event to effect is only applied within the ambit of the physical sciences. For Iqbal, however, by referring to life and mind, the whole concept of cause is totally insignificant due to the fact that:

When we rise to the level of life and mind the concept of cause fails us, and we stand in need of concepts of a different thought: the action of living organisms initiated and planned in the view of an ‘end’ and ‘purpose’ that inhabit within their own selves. (Iqbal 1971, p. 42)

This notion of purpose encapsulates the process of growth and adaptation that signifies possession of a career, which thereby differentiates these two elements from that of a machine. Hence, this career renders that the source of activities of living organisms cannot be explained except in reference to a remote past, which according to Iqbal is a spiritual reality, revealed in, but non-discoverable within spatial experiences. Therefore, for Iqbal, life is a unique phenomenon whereby mechanistic approaches are totally inadequate for its analysis. Interestingly, parallel conjecture is evident in Deacon’s work in which he discusses the concept of tele-

onomy. He clearly draws a distinction between the nature of living and nonliving things by mentioning that:

This causal dichotomy separating living from non-living nature is real, but the appearance of causal incompatibility is partly an unfortunate accident of conceiving of organisms as though they are machines. Although they are indeed functionally organised, living organisms are not just a complicated chemical mechanism. (Deacon 2013, p. 250)

He continued to explain the defining aspect of living nature that distinguishes it from its nonliving counterpart as follows:

As designers and users, we determine the form of a machine to be suited or not to a particular task, but this task otherwise has no relation to the machine's existence. Organism forms evolve in the process of accomplishing a task critical to maintaining the capacity to produce this form, so the task space and form of the organism are essentially inseparable. (Deacon 2013, p. 250)

Another unique approach taken by Iqbal in his explication on the phenomena of life and mind is the passage of their nature within time, which is for Iqbal the most significant aspect of experience elucidated in the Qur'an. He quoted some Qur'anic verses which he deemed significant to this point, including the following:

Indeed, in the alternation of the night and the day and in what Allah has created in the heavens and the earth are signs for a people who fear Allah. (*Yunus* 10: 6)  
And it is He who has made the night and the day in succession for whoever desires to remember or desires gratitude. (*al-Furqan* 25: 62)

He then began his argument by describing the fact that conscious experience is in constant mobility, a perpetual flow whereby nothing is static in the inner life. Iqbal elaborated further on this by referring to Bergson's idea of self-existence:

What do I find when I fix my gaze on my conscious experience? In the words of Bergson, 'I pass from state to state. I am warm or cold. I am merry or sad. I work or do nothing. I look at what is around me or I think of something else. Sensations, feelings, volitions, ideas – such are the changes into which my existence is divided and which colours it in turns. I change, then, without ceasing. (Iqbal 1971, p. 46)

This constant change of the inner self is inconceivable without the involvement of time; thus, conscious existence for Iqbal means 'life in time'. Furthermore, in the existence of self in time, Iqbal divided such faculties into two different natures of selves, namely, the appreciative and the efficient. The efficient self is the practical aspect that deals with the external order of things, which determine the passing states of consciousness and provides spatial dimensions for these states. The mode of time in which the efficient self lives is the serial time that is hardly distinguishable from space; thus, it is deemed as a straight line of spatial points. On the other hand, the deeper existence of experience is the appreciative self, which is in fact the inner centre of experience. At this level of ego, Iqbal contended that the states of consciousness merged into each other to develop a unity whereby every experience permeates the whole. Changes and movements within this level of self are indivisible; hence, the time in which it resides is a nonserial aspect of duration, a pure duration unadulterated by space. Iqbal quoted some evidences from the Qur'an that

elucidate on these two different kinds of duration, (*al-Furqan* 25:59) where the creation of the Heaven and Earth are described as a process lasting thousands of years, whereas in another verse (*al-Qamar* 54:50) it is portrayed as an act ‘as swift as the twinkling of an eye’. Interestingly, Iqbal related this notion of pure time to the concept of *taqdīr* or destiny, a term in the Qur’an that means ‘time regarded as prior to the disclosure of its possibilities’. He thus contended that time is responsible in forming the very essence of things as the Qur’an says: ‘God created all things and assigned to each its destiny’ (*al-Qamar* 54:49) (Cf. Iqbal 1971, p. 50). Arguably, time in its pure sense should thus be regarded as a form of ‘constraint’ – referring to Deacon’s term – to the movements or changes in life and consciousness, and it is relevant to the concept of *taqdīr* in the Qur’an which literally connotes constraint or limit.

Purpose is another element that plays a pivotal role in Iqbal’s conception of life and consciousness, as according to him purpose forms the ‘warp and woof’ of conscious experience. This very element discloses forward perception in consciousness, and it cannot be understood except with reference to the future. Moreover, purposes also constitute a forward push of life. Iqbal proposed a more dynamic approach to the concept of purpose in its relationship to life and consciousness that exist within the corpus of time as such:

From our conscious experience we have seen that to live is to shape and change ends and purposes and to be governed by them. Mental life is teleological in the sense that, while there is no far-off distant goal towards which we are moving, there is a progressive formation of fresh ends, purposes, and ideal scales of value as the process of life grows and expands. (Iqbal 1971, p. 54)

Furthermore, it is worth noting that Iqbal touched on the subject of emergence in discussing life and mind from a slightly different approach. Iqbal agreed with scholars he regarded as ‘advocates of the emergent evolution’, on their definition of emergence as unforeseen and novel facts on their own plane of being, which accept no mechanistic explanation. He then seemed to elaborate on the emergence of the inner self – another unidentified hierarchy of emergence by the modern sciences – mentioned earlier in this article. Hence, Iqbal contended that:

A colony of egos of a low order out of which emerges the ego of a higher order, when their association and interaction reach a certain degree of co-ordination. (Iqbal 1971, p. 106)

To some extent, Iqbal seems to have had a parallel assumption with Deacon on the fact that the novel phenomena of life and mind are both emergent properties of physical entities. However, he argued that even though the mental is dominated by physical elements in its initial development, it then grows in its ability so much so that it dominates the physical and continues to rise to a position of complete independence. Therefore, Iqbal indicated that there is no pure physical level of life and mind. Moreover, Iqbal proposed a solution on the question of what is actually the force of emergence phenomenon, an issue that has yet to be addressed adequately by Deacon. Iqbal’s theory of emergence is in fact supplemented by divine intervention as he contended that:

The Ultimate Ego that makes this emergence emerge is immanent in nature, and is described by the Qur'an as the First and the Last, the visible and the invisible.... (Iqbal 1971, p. 107)

## 8.5 Conclusion

Deacon's work demonstrates certain formulations of critique on the product of Western sciences, encompassing reductionism, evolutionary theory, information theory, cybernetics, dynamic systems theory and neurobiology. As such, he manages to offer a novel approach towards the most difficult puzzle within the edifice of reductive science, namely, the phenomena of life and mind. By introducing some new concepts such as ententional features, absentional features, constraints and emergents, Deacon paves a new path towards elucidating those abstract mystical matters within the order of scientific language. His attempt to infuse the element of value and teleology back into scientific discourse is indeed commendable.

In spite of this, Deacon is reportedly not a monotheist, but a Buddhist, which suggests that his work is not biased or motivated in any way to prove the existence of a Supreme Being. There are significant implications though from his work that there are absentials and constraints. Could both of these be related to God's existence (e.g. as a type of absential, causing attraction between the created and the Creator until they meet or an element of them, i.e. the *rūh*, meeting its source) and constraints, which are divinely placed elements that direct the pattern of evolution of living beings in certain directions according to His plan? Deacon's concept of teleodynamics is defined as: 'The dynamical realization of final causality, in which a given dynamical organization exists because of the consequences of its continuance, and therefore can be described as being self-generating' (Cf. Deacon 2013, p. 275). However, Deacon does not define his teleodynamics in terms of any divine element. A Muslim believer would propose, however, that God Almighty has set up this system just so with its potentials and constraints well known beforehand, so as to achieve His goal and final plan. The organisms are developing and evolving within this grand plan. The authors propose that the inclusion of the role of God, the Creator and Ultimate Planner and Designer, enables the settlement of issues, such as who placed the constraints and the nature of the supreme absential to which all beings are attracted.

## 8.6 Policy Recommendations

Some policy recommendations are proposed here in order for Muslim scientists to garner further benefits from Deacon's work:

- (i) Because Muslim scientists and philosophers have the Qur'an as their divine revelation, they can have a more superior and leading position than do believ-

ing scientists of other religions. This is because if, as Muslims believe, the Qur'an is the only scripture that exists in a pristine form, they can have complete reliance and certainty on the veracity of the revealed text. Scientific evidence can then be interpreted in harmony with the Qur'anic text to provide new insights about the world.

- (ii) Muslim scientists and students should consciously address criticisms towards reductive mechanistic sciences as well as recognise their limits so that they may be more vigilant towards adopting such theories from those sciences in their work or research. The work of Deacon is thus imperative to be taken into account by Muslim scholars and students, as it is likely to offer a critique rightly from within those scientific traditions.
- (iii) Muslim scientists could adopt Deacon's conceptions of ententionals, absentionals and constraints in order to provide Islamic impressions on those concepts. It is thus a strategic platform of engagement and cooperation between scientists from different religious and philosophical inclinations, especially in solving issues that have yet to be addressed adequately by modern science, such as consciousness.
- (iv) Muslim scientists and students might also benefit from Deacon's method of elucidating absential phenomena, particularly in the use of emergent theory as a viable methodology in pursuing multidisciplinary research incorporating the natural and human sciences, so as to explicate a holistic outlook on human nature and other creations.

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**Part III**  
**Tawhidic Science: Principles**

# Chapter 9

## Islam Can Give a Proper Orientation to Science and Technology Development

Mehdi Golshani

**Abstract** In this article, the issue of how Islam can give a proper orientation to science and technology is considered. The position is first taken that science has a longitudinal relationship with religion, i.e. scientific activity is a specific kind of religious activity and the Islamic worldview engenders a suitable comprehensive framework for scientific work and its applications. This provides five roles for religion in scientific activity: firstly, it gives an impetus for the exploration of nature as the Handiwork of God; secondly, it provides a metaphysical basis for science; thirdly, it supplies a suitable epistemology for science; fourthly, it answers questions which are brought up in science, but science per se cannot answer; and finally, it gives a proper direction to applied science and technology (S&T). Under the inclusive Islamic worldview, S&T should be used for understanding God's magnificent creation and for securing human felicity at both the individual and societal levels. Some policy recommendations are provided for S&T development in the Islamic world.

### 9.1 Introduction

By 'science' in this article is meant knowledge in its general sense. Further, regarding religion, only the monotheistic religions are considered. To explain the role of religion in science, we first need to assess 'What is the relationship between science and religion?' Among several views, the following are the most important:

*View 1* – Some scholars consider science and religion belong to two different spheres of human concern. Religion deals with God, while science deals with the study of nature. Scientific activity involves experimentation and observation, while religion is based on revelation; the language of science is the language of prediction and control, and that of religion is worship. Some scholars of this group believe in God, but they consider science and religion as two independent realms.

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*View 2* – Some other scholars consider that science and religion belong to two contradictory realms. Among the people of this category, there are some who are religious conservatives whose main source of information is religious texts, and they do not take scientific findings seriously. There are also materialists whose sole source of information is claimed to be sense-based data, and they do not believe in God nor non-material beings. In their view, empirical science can explain everything. As Jacques Monod explained: ‘Anything can be reduced to simple obvious mechanical interactions. The cell is a machine, the animal is a machine, man is a machine’ (Monod 1974, p. ix).

*View 3* – Some scholars believe there is a common ground between science and religion. For example, there are questions which are brought up in science, but for which science per se cannot provide any answer – such as the role of human beings in the creation and the purpose of creation. As P. Kush, Nobel laureate in physics, stated: ‘Science cannot do a very large number of things and to assume that science may find a technical solution to all problems is the road to disaster’ (Jaki 1992, p. 500). Similarly, faith has a role in science, as it has in religion. For example, faith in the existence of the external world or the comprehensibility of nature is taken for granted in science, but science cannot provide a justification for it. As Max Planck had stated: ‘Anybody who has been seriously engaged in scientific work of any kind realises that over the entrance of the gates of the temple of science are written the words: “Ye must have faith”. It is a quality which the scientist cannot dispense with’ (Planck 1932, p. 214).

*View 4* – Some scholars argue that because science and religion deal with the same world, they should provide a consistent picture of the world. This means that they need a unifying worldview. The present author believes religion can provide such a comprehensive worldview that can justify scientific activity and give it meaning. Henry Margeneau, a contemporary physicist-philosopher, stressed that ‘Science needs religion in order to account for its origin and its successes’ (Margeneau and Varghese 1992, p. 62).

This latter worldview can provide answers to our ultimate questions as well. Charles Townes, Nobel laureate in physics, commented: ‘I do not understand how the scientific approach alone, as separate from a religious approach, can explain an origin of all things. It is true that physicists hope to look behind the “Big Bang” and possibly to explain the origin of our universe as, for example, a type of fluctuation. But then, of what is it a fluctuation and how did this in turn begin to exist?’ (Margeneau and Varghese 1992, p. 123). Arthur Schawlow, another Nobel laureate in physics, concurred: ‘Origin questions should be pursued as vigorously as the scientists’ abilities and interests can take them. But the answers will never be final, and deeper questions will eventually have to be referred to religion’ (Margeneau and Varghese 1992, p. 106). The author believes that the relationship between science and religion is a longitudinal one, i.e. scientific activity is itself a sort of religious duty, done with its own specific tools. This was the understanding of eminent Muslim scientists of the golden era of Islamic civilisation regarding the Qur’anic

messages and prophetic traditions, and this was also the understanding of scientists like Kepler and Newton in the early period of modern science. Charles Townes commented: 'I don't myself separate science and religion, but regard our exploration of the universe as part of religious experience' (Singh and Gomatam 1987, p. 141). In reality, the main attraction for Muslim scientists of the Islamic civilisational era in studying nature was that they considered their studies as an important way of knowing the signs of God in the created world. As Levy stated: 'Apart from a small number of investigators inspired by Greek philosophic ideas, the Muslims who engaged in the pursuit of science did so... in order to discover, in the wonders of nature, the signs or tokens of the glory of God' (Levy 1967, p. 460).

## 9.2 The Role of Religion in Shaping Science and Technology

As mentioned above, science has a longitudinal relationship with theistic religions. Consequently, such a religion can provide a suitable comprehensive framework for conducting scientific or technological work. This is because:

1. It emphasises the study of nature.
2. It provides the metaphysical basis of science.
3. It introduces legitimate ways of discovering the mysteries of nature.
4. It can provide responses to our ultimate questions.
5. It can give the proper orientation to the applications of science and technology.

### 9.2.1 *Emphasis on the Study of God's Handiwork*

According to the Qur'an, natural phenomena are signs of God, and through the understanding of these signs, one attains cognition of the Lord of signs:

Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of night and day, there are signs for those who possess intellects. Those who remember God standing, sitting, and lying on their sides, and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth [and say] 'Our Lord, You have not created this in vain....' (*Al 'Imran* 3:190–191)

Thus, the study of natural phenomena is strongly recommended:

'And in the earth there are signs for those who are sure; And in your own souls (too); will you not then see?' (*al-Dharyyat* 51: 20–21)

The golden era of Islamic civilisation was indebted to this Qur'anic emphasis on the study of God's Handiwork.

## 9.2.2 *The Role of Metaphysical Principles in Science*

As stated above, scientific activity is a kind of religious activity, with its own specific tools. Based on this outlook, the Islamic worldview provides a metaphysical basis for all activities of a believing Muslim, including so-called scientific activities. To clarify this point, we notice that although some scientific activities start with experiments and observations, the presuppositions of a scientist are important in his/her choice of experiments and in his/her choice of theories and their interpretations. This is especially important in the case of fundamental theories. Furthermore, very often empirical data does not lead to a unique theory, and we have an underdetermination of theories by empirical data. Here, the metaphysical biases of a scientist are determinants in his/her choice of theories. For example, in the realm of atomic physics, we have two versions of quantum theory: The standard formulation denies the principle of causality, while the Bohmian mechanics respects causality. The choice between these two formulations of quantum theory is based on the metaphysical prejudices of the scientists.

Similarly, in cosmology, it is noticed that the natural constants, determining the strengths of the forces of nature, are so fine-tuned that they have permitted the appearance of life in our planet. In order to negate fine-tuning by a supernatural agency, some cosmologists have appealed to the hypothesis of the multiverse, according to which there are many universes, rather than one. In each of these universes, different laws and forces, with different strengths, are present. Thus, there is a possibility for the existence of another universe with the characteristics of our universe. Of course, in both of these views, one incorporates one's own metaphysical assumptions. However, as the eminent physicist, *Paul Davies*, believed, the assumption of a designer is much more economical than that of a multiverse: 'Not everybody is happy with the many-universes theory. To postulate an infinity of unseen and unseeable universes just to explain the one we do see seems like a case of excess baggage carried to the extreme. It is simpler to postulate one unseen God. This is the conclusion also reached by Swinburne' (Davies 1993, p. 190).

Another important question to consider is whether our universe has a purpose. Some eminent scientists, such as *Steven Weinberg*, Nobel laureate in physics, deny it: 'The more the universe seems more comprehensible, the more it also seems pointless' (Weinberg 1993, p. 154). *Richard Dawkins*, a well-known contemporary zoologist, echoed the same point: 'The universe we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom no design, no purpose, no evil and no God, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference' (Dawkins 1998, p. 382).

On the other hand, some physicists consider our universe to be a purposeful world. In the words of *Paul Davies*: 'The laws [of physics] ... seem to be the product of exceedingly ingenious design... The universe must have a purpose' (Davies 1984, p. 243). Davies argued that the denial of purpose for our universe destroys the rational basis of science:

Science is a voyage of discovery, and as with all such voyages, you have to believe there is something meaningful out there to discover before you embark on it ... If the universe is

pointless and reasonless, reality is ultimately absurd. We should then be obliged to conclude that the physical world of experience is a fiendishly clever piece of trickery: absurdity masquerading as rational order. Weinberg's aphorism can thus be averted. If the universe is truly pointless, then it is also incomprehensible, and the rational basis of science collapses. (John Templeton Foundation n.d., p. 4)

Furthermore, our inability to find purpose in the universe does not imply that there is no purpose. Thus, the denial of purpose in the universe is a philosophical decision, rather than a scientific one.

Another important point is that scientists usually make use of some heuristic principles in their scientific work. For *Heisenberg*, the simplicity of theories was important, and for *Dirac*, the beauty of theories was his focus. In recent times, the unification of the fundamental forces of nature has become a target. But, it is interesting that some of these principles have their roots in religion. Thus, *Linde*, an eminent cosmologist who is not a theist, believes that the root of seeking the unification of forces lies in monotheistic religions: 'The whole of modern cosmology has been deeply influenced by the Western tradition of monotheism... The idea that it is possible to understand the universe through one ultimate "theory of everything" is an outgrowth of belief in one God' (Linde 1998, p. B4.).

### 9.2.3 *Ways of Knowing Nature*

In present-day science, in which positivism rules, sense-based data are considered the only reliable source of information about our natural world. But, although the Qur'an recognises the significance of the senses in understanding our world, it does not consider sense-based data as being sufficient for full comprehension; rather, it emphasises the role of the intellect in the interpretation of the empirical data, while also recognises the role of intuition and revelation. It also acknowledges the existence of the spiritual world. Thus, the Islamic worldview has a much wider perspective of the universe than admitted by the positivistic outlook.

Now, while the Qur'an gives a hint to the significance of the senses,

And God has brought you forth from the bellies of your mothers while you did not know anything. He made for you hearing, eye sight, and hearts.... (*al-Nahl* 16:78)

it also emphasises the role of intellectual work on sense data:

Have they not travelled over the land so that they have hearts by which they may apply reason? (*al-Hajj* 22:46)

Furthermore, the Qur'an also mentions different levels of revelation, which starts from prophetic revelation and passes to intuition (Golshani 2011, pp. 142–152). Many contemporary scholars, while denying prophetic revelations, accept the role

of intuition in scientific discoveries. Many important findings of scientists have been achieved through intuition. As *Charles Townes* concurred: ‘Most of the important scientific discoveries come out very differently and are much more closely akin to revelation. The term itself is generally not used for scientific discovery, since we are in the habit of reserving revelation for the religious realm. In scientific circles one speaks of intuition, accidental discovery, or says simply that “he had a wonderful idea”’ (Townes 1966).

### 9.2.4 *Response to Our Ultimate Questions*

The positivistic outlook sees empirical science as the only reliable source for answering our questions. Any question that cannot be answered by science is not considered meaningful. During the second half of the twentieth century, however, there were many eminent scientists – theist or otherwise – who saw science as not being capable of answering our ultimate questions, questions such as: ‘What do we live for?’ or ‘Where do the laws of nature come from?’ In the words of the eminent philosopher of science, *Karl Popper*: ‘It is important to realise that science does not make assertions about ultimate questions—about the riddles of existence, or about man’s task in this world’ (Popper 1987, p. 141). *Peter Medawar*, Nobel laureate in medicine, agreed: ‘That there is indeed a limit upon science is made very likely by the existence of questions that science cannot answer and that no conceivable advance of science would ... power it to answer’ (Medawar 1984, p. 66).

*Paul Davies* beautifully argued why some questions that are brought up in science cannot receive their final explanations in science, and to receive a satisfactory answer, one has to go beyond science:

However successful our scientific explanations may be, they always have certain starting assumptions built in. For example, an explanation of some phenomenon in terms of physics presupposes the validity of the laws of physics, which are taken as given. But one can ask where these laws come from in the first place. One could even question the origin of the logic upon which all scientific reasoning is founded. Sooner or later we all have to accept something as given, whether it is God, or logic, or a set of laws, or some other foundation for existence. Thus, ‘ultimate’ questions will always lie beyond the scope of empirical science as it is usually defined. (Davies 1993, p. 15)

He added: ‘Personally I feel more comfortable with a deeper level of explanation than the laws of physics. Whether the use of the term “God” for that deeper level is appropriate is, of course, a matter of debate’ (Davies 1993, p. 189). Consequently, the development of science during the last few decades has given the hint that everything is not explainable in terms of empirical science.

Two eminent contemporary physicists have explicitly admitted that the only response to our ultimate questions comes from religion. In the words of *Freeman Dyson* (2000): ‘The greatest unsolved mysteries are the mysteries of our existence as conscious beings in a small corner of a vast universe. Why are we here? Does the universe have a purpose? Whence comes our knowledge of good and evil? These mysteries and a hundred others like them, are beyond the reach of science. They lie

on the other side of the border, within the jurisdiction of religion'. *John Barrow* also sees the root of universal questions in religion: 'Many of the deepest and most engaging questions that we grapple with still about the nature of the universe have their origins in our purely religious quest for meaning. The concept of a lawful universe with order that can be understood and relied upon emerged largely out of religious beliefs about the nature of God' (John Templeton Foundation 2006).

Similarly, science cannot provide a framework for ethical values, while values are indeed important in all scientific work. In the words of *Karl Popper* (1978): 'The fact that science cannot make any pronouncements about ethical principles has been misinterpreted as indicating that there are no such principles, while in fact the search for truth presupposes ethics'.

Now, since scientific knowledge cannot avoid an answer to our questions about the physical world, some scientists have suggested that we look for other kinds of knowledge for finding answers to these questions. For example, *Bernard d'Espagnat*, an eminent physicist-philosopher, suggested: 'It now seems plausible that approaches other than science (I mentioned music, painting and poetry) should also concurrently with science be capturing some undefinable something of the structure of independent reality' (d'Espagnat 1987, p. 160). However, other eminent scientists, such as *Charles Townes*, consider that only religion can provide a convincing response to our ultimate questions: 'In my view, the question of origin seems to be left unanswered if we explore from a scientific view alone. Thus, I believe there is a need for some religious or metaphysical explanation if we are to have one' (Margeneau and Varghese 1992, p. 123).

### 9.2.5 *The Role of Religion in the Constructive Applications of Science*

The Noble Qur'an guides mankind in his proper relationship with the world. In it God states that He made human beings as His vicegerent on earth:

When your Lord said to the angels, 'Indeed I am going to set a viceroy on the earth....'  
(*al-Baqarah* 2:30)

and that God has provided all necessary provisions for human life:

Certainly We have established you on the earth, and made in it [various] means of livelihood for you.... (*al-A'raf* 7:10)

God Almighty has also imposed responsibilities on human beings, both at the individual and social levels:

By your Lord, We will question them all for what they were doing. (*al-Hijr* 15 :92-93)

and has explicitly ordered us to avoid causing any corruption on the earth:

And do not cause corruption on the earth after its restoration.... (*al-A'raf* 7:56)

Among mankind's responsibilities are their duties toward their societies:

They have faith in God and the Last Day, and bid what is right and forbid what is wrong and are active in [performing] good deeds.... (*Al'Imran* 3:114)

In a *prophetic tradition*, we read that 'All creatures are God's family (dependents); and God loves most those who are the most beneficent to his family (dependents)' (*Al-Suyuti n.d.*, p. 558).

Scientific activity always takes place under a worldview, which can either be a secular or a religious worldview. If it takes place within a religious worldview, its result should be for the welfare of humanity. If, however, it takes place under a secular worldview, there is no guarantee it would not lead to destructive results. Indeed, after the secularisation of science, its harmful results became evident in the first half of the twentieth century. Consequently, some eminent scientists and philosophers, such as Bertrand Russell (1924, pp. 62–63), signalled a warning for the future of human civilisation. *Nicolai Maxwell*, the notable contemporary philosopher of science, summed up the matter beautifully:

Much scientific and technological research is devoted to the interests of wealthy countries and not to the interests of the thousands of millions who live in abject poverty. Medical research is devoted primarily to the diseases of the wealthy, not the poor. And there is the scandal of military research. In the UK, 30% of the budget for research and development is spent on the military. In the USA it is 50%. In our world, fraught with gross inequalities, injustices, conflict and war, one may well wonder whether this expenditure is in the best interests of humanity. Striking, too, is the general silence about the matter; the failure of the scientific community to speak up about it. (Maxwell 2008, p. 102)

Some eminent scholars have noticed that the destructive results of S&T are due to the secular worldview dominant in our scientific circles and that there is a need for the change of this worldview, so that S&T would genuinely support the welfare of mankind. This can be achieved by the replacement of the secular worldview by one that takes care of all dimensions of human life and gives proper direction to the applications of science. This view is supported by *Richard Thompson* of La Jolla Institute of Research, California:

The understanding of nature as a machine has resulted in much technological progress, but now we find people throughout the world abandoning supremacy – a struggle that culminates in the construction of more and more deadly machines of mass destruction.

It can be argued that this trend of modern civilization has been strongly encouraged by scientific theories that appear to contradict any philosophy of life other than materialism. It may be very difficult to change this dangerous trend. But an essential ingredient for such a change could be the wide dissemination of a valid approach to scientific knowledge that allows for a tangible spiritual dimension to human life and is compatible with the ancient understanding that mankind is dependent on a transcendental Supreme Being. Such an approach opens up the possibility of directing human energy towards higher spiritual goals and of providing a solid ethical basis for the conduct of our material affair. (Singh and Gomatam 1987, p. 235)

After the appearance of misuses of science, some philosophers who were generally against the application of religious axioms in science, nevertheless, have accepted a guiding role for religion concerning scientific applications. For example, Swedish philosopher *Mikael Stenmark* remarked:

Golshani is right to propose that [a] scientist's training should be accompanied by ethical education in order to stimulate moral concern and responsibility. Whether such training could most effectively be done in a religious context is a question on which, of course, advocates for different worldviews would disagree. But that Islam should direct or at least influence the proper orientation to be adopted toward the application of science in countries where the majority of citizens are Muslims seems to be something which must be permitted, and the same holds true for any other religion or ideology. Thus, it is appropriate to talk about an Islamic science. (Stenmark 2004, pp. 228–229)

Stenmark is, however, against the application of religious principles in deciding between theories (Stenmark 2004, p. 231). The question then arises as to whether science can really remain neutral to religion, if one makes generalisations which are beyond the scope of science per se. It is in these generalisations that metaphysical assumptions enter, and these are not generally neutral toward religion.

### 9.3 Conclusion and Policy Recommendations for Science and Technology Development

There is no doubt that modern science has brought enormous benefits to mankind. It has, however, also been used sometimes to the detriment of humanity and the environment. The author believes this is due to the divorce of knowledge from wisdom, which, in turn, is rooted in the dominance of a secularistic worldview in academic circles. The scientists following this worldview are content with the results of their work, forgetting that science should serve humanity, rather than harming human beings and the environment.

Science has a theoretical dimension and an applied one and for both Islam has priorities. In the theoretical domain, Islam gives scientists a theistic outlook – an outlook that considers God as the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, considers the world to have more than a material dimension, sees a purpose in the creation of the universe and believes in a moral order. Furthermore, it provides a rich metaphysical basis for science which can help scientists in shaping theories and in selecting between them. In the applied domain, the Islamic worldview gives proper directions to the applications of S&T, and it emphasises taking care of societies' needs. Clearly, the difference of opinion about the goals of scientific activity is rooted in differences in the worldviews of the scientists involved.

Presently, a secularistic worldview is prevalent among Muslim scientists, and the Islamic world lags in S&T and depends heavily on the West, as it cannot properly care for its own essential needs. Serious steps are therefore needed to address these deficiencies. To address the aforementioned forgotten factors, the following actions should be taken:



- *Governance of S&T from an Islamic worldview*

The most important ingredient in the development of science in the Islamic world is the necessity for rulings on all scientific planning and activities to be based on an Islamic worldview. This element is needed to differentiate the products of Muslim S&T from the materialistic outcomes of S&T in the West and to ensure conformance to the programme set by the Noble Qur'an and the prophetic traditions for the believers. In order to achieve this, the following steps are recommended:

- (a) One or two courses should be offered at university level in which Islamic philosophy of science is introduced and by which the students become familiar with the Islamic worldview.
- (b) A course(s) should be offered on values and ethical issues as well as social responsibility – all explained from Islamic perspectives.

- *Changing policy makers' mentality about science*

The attention of Muslim governments currently is on importing Western technologies without paying due attention to their scientific base or caring for establishing a proper foundation for scientific innovation. It is clearly a duty of academic circles to provide suitable advice to their governments through appropriate channels.

- *Providing opportunities for brilliant scientists*

Both universities and research institutions should provide special attention to brilliant scientists, supporting them and providing for their needs.

- *Prioritising care for the nation's needs*

Currently, most Muslim countries try to imitate the West in their efforts to build S&T capacities. This is often done blindly without considering national needs, socioeconomic conditions, cultural identity or moral values. Universities and research institutes should search rigorously by identifying the needs and priorities of their respective society and industry. They should define appropriate projects, seeking help from both the government and the private sector. This requires strong interaction nationally between universities and research institutes and industry sectors.

- *Promoting a critical attitude in academic circles*

Having a critical attitude is often weak in academic circles of the Islamic world and is rarely encouraged. Currently, most of our universities are simply centres for knowledge dissemination, rather than authentically seeking to extend the frontiers of human knowledge. This attitude destroys creativity in young scientists. It should be changed. Special prizes should be awarded for innovative work.

- *Concern for quality*

Throughout the Islamic world, preference is given to Western products. An important factor for this is the lower quality of products produced in the Islamic

world. Thus, an important factor in developing self-reliance in the Islamic world is prioritising the quality of its research and products.

- *Attention to specialists and experts*

Islamic countries are losing a large proportion of their capable scientists and technicians due to the lack of internal opportunities, the presence of some avoidable obstacles and the general neglect of S&T specialists. To lessen the ‘brain drain’ of Muslim scientists, proper attention should be provided to them, rewarding their achievements, so that they are encouraged to stay to advance the frontiers of knowledge and address their society’s needs. In this direction, competency should be the rule of thumb in allocating institutional positions and responsibilities.

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# Chapter 10

## Vision in Action: Operationalising the Islamisation of Science and Technology

Adi Setia

**Abstract** Synergy between Islam and science and technology refers to the critical and creative integration of the latter into the ethico-intellectual framework of the worldview of Islam, leading to the holistic Islamisation of science and technology rather than to the reductionist techno-scientisation of Islam. If this principle is well understood and properly applied by Muslim scientists and technologists, they will then be able to discriminate the good from much of what currently goes by the name of science and technology and thereby render their work and research to be truly beneficial for mankind. Brief case studies from the fields of engineering, medicine, agriculture, chemistry, biology, economics and ecology are cited to illustrate the proper application of this principle of critical and creative integration.

### 10.1 Introduction

Much of the conceptual rational groundwork for the vision of the Islamisation of the modern sciences has been laid out in some detail in the current author's previous articles<sup>1</sup> on the subject, especially those that have been published regularly from 2003 to 2013 in the Canadian-based journal *Islam & Science* (now renamed *Islamic Sciences*).<sup>2</sup> These articles, in turn, have built and elaborated upon the conceptual framework of Islamisation and the worldview of Islam expounded by Professor Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas in a number of his works, especially *Islam and the Philosophy of Science* (Al-Attas 1989), *Islam and Secularism* (Al-Attas 1993), *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam* (Al-Attas 1995) and *The Positive Aspects*

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<sup>1</sup>Building on the works of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, Osman Bakar, Hossein Nasr, A. I. Sabra, George Saliba, Imre Lakatos, Michael Polanyi, Noam Chomsky, David Bohm and E. F. Schumacher.

<sup>2</sup>Accessible online.

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of *Tasawwuf* (Al-Attas 1981), as well as drawn upon insights from the history and philosophy of both Islamic and Western science.

It is not the intention of this paper to repeat the above groundwork in any detail but only to present the following basic conclusions of it to serve as premises for moving forward to the brief case studies invoked to illustrate the viability and effectiveness of this vision for generating – as well as *regenerating* – sciences and technics that benefit rather than harm nature and human culture.<sup>3</sup>

## 10.2 Premises

1. Science is any systemic study of nature and/or human culture.
2. Such studies entail interaction with nature and culture that is on the one hand cognitive and, on the other hand, ethico-moral.
3. Therefore, ethics and technics are inextricably intertwined such that the latter inevitably embodies ethics – *technics is ethics in action*.
4. Hence, every technics and thereby technology is value-laden with both cognitive and ethico-moral values. In other words, epistemological and axiological considerations enter into *all* sciences and *all* technologies.
5. Since all sciences and technologies are value-laden, Muslims need to choose and/or create sciences or technologies that are laden with values compatible with the worldview of Islam, i.e. the vision of truth and reality projected by the metaphysics of Islam.
6. Since science and technology involve cognitive and ethico-moral interaction with nature and culture, there are ecological and sociological implications impacting on and arising from the techno-scientific enterprise, and therefore, it cannot be disembedded from its larger ecological and sociological contexts.
7. Since science is any systemic study of nature and/or culture, then it is in the existential and cognitive interests of such a study – and the scientists doing such a study – to ensure the preservation of the object of study.
8. The demarcation between what are called the natural sciences and what are called the human or social sciences is only relative and for classificatory and organisational convenience; in the final analysis, *all sciences are human sciences*, simply because only human beings engage in the systemic study of nature and culture, and therefore, *all sciences serve human interests*.
9. It also follows that *human subjectivity enters into all sciences and all technologies* and into the methodology of study and research, and thereby *scientific facts are both objective and subjective* – subjective because they involve

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<sup>3</sup>For detailed documentation and references to all themes and issues raised in this paper, please see my relevant articles published in *Islam & Science* journal (renamed *Islamic Sciences* from vol. 11).

personal commitment on the part of the individual scientist and objective because they are open for public scrutiny among members of a given scientific community.<sup>4</sup>

10. Given these considerations, it is the duty of Muslim scientists and technologists to demarcate the good from much of what currently passes for science and technology in order to ensure both its epistemological probity and its axiological relevance and in order that it is of true cognitive and pragmatic benefit to Muslims in particular and mankind in general.<sup>5</sup>

### 10.3 Case Studies

What follows are some brief case studies from the fields of engineering, medicine, agriculture, chemistry, biology, mathematics, economics and ecology cited to illustrate the proper application of this principle of critical and creative integration of science and technology into the conceptual framework of the worldview of Islam based on the above premises.

#### 10.3.1 *Technology in General*

The first aspect regarding technology is not whether it is ‘high tech’ or ‘low tech’ but whether it is *appropriate* – that is, whether it is proper or improper to the receiving natural and cultural contexts in which it is to be applied and put to use. *Appropriate technology* adapts itself harmoniously into the receiving context and does not impose itself, thereby pre-empting disruption of the surrounding natural and cultural environment.

‘Appropriate’ comes from the word ‘proper’, which means to choose a technology – whether external or internal to the receiving environment – and then to carefully and creatively bring it into a proper structural and functional relationship with salient elements of the receiving context in which it is to be applied. It also means to first *read* and *reflect* on the natural and cultural landscape of an environment prior to deciding on the technologies to be imported, adopted or created for use in that environment.

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<sup>4</sup>The ‘*factness*’ of a *fact* or the process by which a fact is recognised as such is a function of the method leading to its discovery and of the theory endowing it with significance. For more details, see Polanyi (1974).

<sup>5</sup>More details are available in Setia (2007).

Many of the problems arising from modern technology have arisen from its coercive imposition on nature and culture rather than from its appropriation, i.e. making it *proper to* the receiving natural and cultural context. Modern Western corporate-driven technology tends to force itself arrogantly onto nature and human culture rather than adapting itself humbly to the latter. Because there is both natural and cultural diversity in the world, including considerable environmental variability, there can never be a universal technological approach to every problem or situation.

In Malay, ‘appropriate technology’ is *teknologi mesria*, where *mesria* means *mesra insan dan alam* (friendly to humankind and nature). As such, the Islamic concept of *adab* or (propriety/proper mode of conduct) is of particular relevance; for what is technology but the manner in which science conducts itself or acts in relation to nature and human culture.

According to al-Sharif al-Jurjani (d. 843/1413), *adab* is ‘an understanding of that by which one is safeguarded against all types of error’ (*ma’rifatun ma yuhtaraz bi-hi ‘an jami’ anwa’ al-khafa’*). By investigating the landscape of an environment and understanding how the various natural and cultural elements constituting it are related and integrated into what makes it an organic and harmonious whole, one can know how to appropriate or create a technology and apply it in such a manner that it respects and preserves the integrity of that environment rather than disrupts it. It is that kind of technology which we call *teknologi mesria* or *convivial technology* for which we should be vigilant against all the types of error that are now seen destroying the integrity of nature and culture in the names of ‘progress’, ‘change’ and ‘development’.<sup>6</sup>

What follows are brief expositions on how the concept of *appropriate technology* can be expressed in practice in the various techno-scientific disciplines.

### 10.3.2 Engineering and Chemistry

There are new and rising alternatives to conventional engineering and chemistry approaches, both of which have been responsible for much of the havoc (e.g. pollution in its various forms) visited upon the natural and cultural environment. This more benign and responsible conceptual and practical framework is called ‘green engineering’ and ‘green chemistry’.

Green engineering and green chemistry opt for: (i) inputs and outputs that are inherently less hazardous; (ii) prevention rather than treatment of waste; (iii) minimisation by design of energy consumption and material use; (iv) maximisation by design of mass, energy, space, and time efficiency; (v) meeting needs while minimising excess; (vi) ensuring commercial afterlife by design; (vii) renewable rather

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<sup>6</sup>For more on appropriate technology, see Darrow (1986); Hazeltine (1998, 2003); and Dunn (1978).

than depleting material and energy inputs; (viii) maximal incorporation of all materials used into the final product; (ix) benign solvents and auxiliaries; (x) derivatives reduction; (xi) catalysts rather than stoichiometric combustion and (xii) degradation by design.<sup>7</sup>

### 10.3.3 *Biology and Related Sciences*

Biology is the study of life and thus cannot be about the study of dead, dissected frogs and cockroaches on a sterile lab bench (Hart et al. 2008). Realising this, a biology school teacher may want to transform their biology course into a true study of the ‘science of life’ by putting the ‘bio’ back into biology through the phenomenological approach<sup>8</sup> to the study of nature by opting, *inter alia*, for the class to study actual living frogs by a pond in the woods, rather than chloroformed or tortured, dead, dissected and pinned to a cold lab bench, thoroughly disembedded from any real, living ecosystemic contexts of the natural world. As The Nature Institute (n.d.) has stated:

Many of us were introduced to biology—the science of life—by dissecting frogs, and we never learned anything about living frogs in nature. Modern biology has increasingly moved out of nature and into the laboratory, driven by a desire to find an underlying mechanistic basis of life. Despite all its success, this approach is one-sided and urgently calls for a counterbalancing movement toward nature. Only if we find ways of transforming our propensity to reduce the world to parts and mechanisms, will we be able to see, value, and protect the integrity of nature and the interconnectedness of all things. This demands a new way of seeing.

Such an approach to science and the study of nature is obviously more in accord with the Islamic conception of nature as exhibiting the signs of God (*āyāt Allāh*), as such natural phenomena celebrate – with the ‘tongues’ of their existential states (*lisān al-ḥāl*) – the praises of their Lord: ‘And there is not a thing but hymns His praise’ (*wa in min shay’in illā yusabbiḥu bi-ḥamdihi*) (Qur’an, *al-Isra*’ 17: 44).<sup>9</sup>

### 10.3.4 *Medicine*

Vivisection – meaning ‘to cut alive’, or the more politically correct phrases, ‘animal testing’ or ‘animal experimentation’ – is the way in which Western, business-driven medicine tortures various species of live animals (rats, mice, rabbits, chimpanzees, dogs, cats) to test drugs in order to rid humanity of their ever-lengthening list of

<sup>7</sup>For more details, see Anastas and Warner (2000); Lancaster (2010); Allen (2002); and Sarte (2010).

<sup>8</sup>See Seaman (1998); and Steiner (2007).

<sup>9</sup>See also The Nature Institute (n.d.) and Benyus (2002).



diseases. As a method of medical research (specifically testing drugs for safety and effectiveness), it is relatively new (only a hundred or so years old) and particular to modern Western medical culture, which is now hopelessly corrupted – cognitively and morally – by crass commercialism and corporatism (Rodwin 2011).

Quite apart from the extrinsic question of ethical concern for the welfare of lab animals, there is also a more fundamental intrinsic question, namely, that of the scientific probity (or cognitive value) of the underlying, largely unexamined assumption of a significant degree of biological, biochemical and physiological parity between laboratory test animals and human beings justifying extrapolations of laboratory data from the former to the latter (Croce 2000; Greek 2000).

In this regard, the *kalām* (theological) dialectical deconstruction and reconstruction of modern medicine<sup>10</sup> for Muslim medical researchers will be for finding systemic alternatives to both the scientific and ethical pitfalls of vivisection, including valid alternatives critically sourced from presently marginalised Western (e.g. homoeopathy, naturopathy) and Eastern medical traditions (e.g. traditional Chinese medicine) which could be incorporated into a well-articulated Islamic Medicine Research Program (IMRP). Some of these alternatives can also be gleaned by undertaking evidence-based medical research into the well-documented but largely neglected vast *corpus* of the thousand-year-old cosmopolitan Islamic medical tradition.

### 10.3.5 Agriculture

Modern agriculture is overly chemical intensive, with widespread uses of pesticides, herbicides, synthetic nitrogen fertilisers and other inputs, which has been shown to poison and degrade the soil, kill rural wildlife and even toxify harvests and disrupt the health of farmers and workers.<sup>11</sup>

Traditional farming methods have been perfectly adapted to local socio-natural conditions, generating a symbiotic, holistic balance between the needs of humanity and the rights of nature (King 2004). As the word implies, agriculture is a *culture*, a way of life of mutual respect, communal give and take and cooperative rather than competitive living. Indeed, there have been Islamic agro-innovations in the past, but such were within ecological and cultural limits, as the case of Andalusian agricultural science and practice (*‘ilm al-filāḥah*; The Filaha Texts Project n.d.) shows. It is not a mere business as the modern corruption of the original word into ‘agribusiness’ would have it – exemplified perhaps in the infamous case of Monsanto – which imposes a faceless corporate tyranny of disembedded, impersonal profit maximisation on once self-respecting, independent farmers and indigenous peoples, reducing them to the state of wage and debt slaves (Mary-Monique 2010), squatters and refugees on their very ancestral lands with native customary rights, which have now

<sup>10</sup>For details, see Setia (2012).

<sup>11</sup>See, e.g. Shiva (1992).

been wrested from them by corporations that have co-opted the political and legal structures of the state for their self-serving agenda. It is strange that agricultural food production, which once unquestionably served the wellbeing of mankind, should now, in the hands of big agrochemical companies, be seen as working towards destroying the very ecological and cultural basis of that wellbeing.

In order to return agricultural practice onto the ethical and moral path of compassion and service towards both culture and nature, Muslim agriculturalists should attempt to rearticulate an authentic Islamic Agricultural Research Program (IARP) that eschews harmful chemical fertilisers and pesticides altogether. This should be followed by looking into the various sustainable organic agricultural methods now available, such as permaculture (Mollison 1988) and natural farming (Fukuoka 2013), and develop new ones by drawing upon the 1000 years of accumulated experience of the Islamic agricultural tradition – the original, truly ‘green’ revolution in the history of mankind. In this respect, the ‘greening the desert’ initiative by the world-renowned permaculturist Geoff Lawton and his partners in Jordan (Macintosh 2007) is a great inspiration for us all who care deeply about nurturing a healthy relationship with soil, soul and society.

### 10.3.6 *Economy and Ecology*

‘Economy’ means ‘the law of the household’, while ‘ecology’ is the science or study of the household, and the ‘household’ extends from the family (*tadbīr al-manzil*) to the city (*tadbīr al-madīnah*) and then to the earth (*khilāfat al-arḍ*) as the macro household. From this perspective, economics and ecology are essentially one science and one discipline, *not* two separate disciplines at loggerheads with one another as is currently perceived in secular modern academia. Moreover, the fact of the matter is that economics from the Islamic understanding is *the science of earning and provisioning* (*ilm al-iktisāb wa’l-infāq*), and hence, it is the study of how people earn their livelihoods by drawing upon the Divine Bounty in nature, thereby showing very clearly that the science of *economics is dependent on the science of ecology* (Setia 2011; Setia et al. 2015).

From this understanding, an education policymaker may create courses on ecology as prerequisites for an economics programme or even embed economics altogether into ecology and/or sociology, thereby redefining economics along the lines envisaged above, creating a new discipline that may be termed *ecologics of economics*.<sup>12</sup> In any case, since economics is the science of household management or, rather, the science of household stewardship – the end of which is the wellbeing of the household – then any economic system that leads, wittingly or unwittingly, to the dissolution of the household, or to the earth as the macro household, can only be considered an elaborate nihilistic inversion of the true meaning and purpose of economics and the economy.

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<sup>12</sup> See Cato (2012) and Daly (2011).

### 10.3.7 *Mathematics*

Mathematics, like all other sciences – exact or inexact, pure or impure – is value-laden. Values existed prior to the axioms, and the latter embody the former. Hence, mathematics is the formalisation of values by which the latter are clarified and made operative. From this understanding, Muslim mathematicians should go about designing progressive research programmes for operationalising Islamic values in the sciences through the power of mathematical rigour and objectivity (Setia 2008).

Progressive mathematical research may be motivated by theoretical or cognitive change (e.g. from descent to design theory), ethical change (e.g. from toxic to green chemistry) or legal change (e.g. from fractional to full-reserve banking). Consequently, at times, progressive mathematical research is directed at discovering new, better theories or methods, at other times at applying existing theories and methods to tackle problems arising from a radical rethinking of prevalent ideas and concepts, and at other times to the formalisation of the empirical and practical implications of a heightened awareness of the cognitive and ethical imperatives of scientific work.

A case in point is the *Mathematical Interpretation of Creationary Theory*. It is often claimed by neo-Darwinists that creationism, or creationary theory, is a merely religious metaphysical dogma not amenable to scientific, empirical inquiry, i.e. not testable against observed facts of the extramental physical world. However, the same can be said for evolutionary theory, which has a long and chequered pre-Darwinian history as a more or less fact-free metaphysical idea before Charles Darwin came upon the scene to rearticulate it in more experiential terms, rendering it amenable to empirical testing against physical and biological observations. *Whether Darwinian theory has actually passed the test of empirical observation is quite another question.*

The real question about creationary theory is not about its metaphysical nature nor lack thereof but whether it could be infused with experiential content sufficient enough for it to be *re-expressed* as a physical, scientific theory amenable to rigorous systematic empirical inquiry. In other words, if an originally metaphysical, meta-scientific theory (religious or otherwise), such as creationary, can be consistently reconceptualised in physical, experiential terms, then it becomes a scientific theory held to the same stringent empirical tests as its counterpart: evolutionary theory.

If evolution can be allowed to go from a metaphysical concept to a physical one, such development should not be denied to creationism, in the name of ‘objective, scientific fair play’. Therefore, the real problem with creationary theory is the following:

*If the world is created by a transcendent intelligence of power and wisdom, then what precisely are the observable physical features of the world indicating it as being a product of intelligence rather than of chance?*

In the end, as far as science is concerned, the question boils down to whether the given empirical evidence is weighted in favour of one theory over the other.

Michael Behe (1998), in his influential book *Darwin's Black Box*, has proposed a powerful empirical theory of creation or design that I believe can be further developed, extended and explicated in more exact (i.e. mathematical) terms to eventually completely supersede the mainstream neo-Darwinian consensus. His quasi-formal, physical definition of 'design' can be briefly paraphrased and restated in the following terms:

Design is the arrangement of parts to realise a structural and/or functional whole beyond the capacity of the individual, separate parts, such that the absence or removal of any one of those parts destroys the structure and/or function.

This brief definition has captured the essential and formal elements of anything that can be described as having been designed, thus rendering it possible for its logical implications to be further worked out mathematically and then tested empirically against any aspect of biological or non-biological phenomena. Thus, the foundational conceptual view is (following al-Fakhr al-Razi and Nursi) this:

Given that nature is an integral whole, if anything in nature is created/designed, then everything is, including the whole of nature itself.

This will lead to what the mathematician, Robert A. Herrmann (2002), calls a *General Intelligent Design* (GID) theory, already implied in qualitative terms by Nursi (1989) in his remarkable work, *Nature: Cause or Effect*.

Right now, the standard creationary theory, as articulated by Behe and Dembski (call it the Behean-Dembskian synthesis), is arbitrarily restricted to biological function. Muslim mathematicians should be able to raise the stakes of the creation-evolution debate by formally generalising the design theory to all natural phenomena – biological or physical – i.e. to both biotic and abiotic systems. The present writer believes that Muslim mathematicians who reject neo-Darwinian evolution will be able to draw from systems and information theory, as well as other relevant branches of mathematics, to formulate progressive research programmes for developing new mathematical techniques to describe, clarify and bring into more precise analytic focus the design features self-evident in both biological and non-biological phenomena, from the subatomic to the cosmic and from inanimate rocks to animate brains.

## 10.4 Conclusions and Recommendation

Modern science and its technological offshoots are, in many complex ways, destructive towards nature and by extension towards mankind. If, by definition, science is 'the study of nature', then obviously it is in the interest of science to preserve nature since *scientific curiosity and study entail moral responsibility*. However, the paradox now is that the more science discovers and knows about nature, the more nature is devastated, and the less remains of it to be studied and appreciated. It is as though

the modern pursuit of abstract, cerebral science and its manipulative technological offshoots inevitably go hand in hand with the desolation and disappearance of living nature – but this position is unacceptably fatalistic for truly concerned and reflective Muslim scientists.

For Muslims, the Qur'anic ethics of universal cosmic mercy points clearly towards another way of practicing science, namely, one that respects and preserves nature (and by extension mankind, i.e. human culture) rather than destroying it. A well-articulated dialectics of science involving the active participation of all thinking, reflective and self-critical 'Ulama', scientists and technologists will facilitate realising that science in practice.<sup>13</sup>

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# Chapter 11

## ***Maqasid al-Sharī'ah*: A Traditional Source for Ensuring Design and Development of Modern Technology for Humanity's Benefit**

**Amana Raquib**

**Abstract** There is a pressing need in the Muslim world to engage in a broader religious reflection on the nature of modern technology in order to respond to the challenges posed by the contemporary technological paradigm. The understanding of modern technology cannot be restricted to its consequences and uses alone. It is far more pervasive as it conditions our thoughts and shapes our goals and ideals. Given the intellectual, spiritual, social, moral and environmental crises of the contemporary postmodern technological world, it is imperative to assess modern technology from within the Islamic ethical framework and devise an Islamic paradigm for the holistic understanding and development of technology that has the moral robustness as well as practical feasibility to respond to contemporary problems wrought by a spiritually and morally impoverished technology. The *maqasid al-sharī'ah* provides such a fruitful resource. Muslims need to revisit their traditional ideas of benefit/good (*maṣlaḥah*) and use this fundamental religio-ethical concept for developing technology that is beneficial to humankind.

Since modern technology is permeated with its own conception of the good life, the problem in the Islamic context is how human interests (*maṣlaḥah*) in a religio-legal discourse can deal with the technological set of values. Muslim jurists, when assessing modern technology, often resort to the maxim that paints an optimistic picture of technology in attaining human progress. This leads them mostly to interpret human benefit (*maṣlaḥah*) within the technological framework and issue fatwas accordingly. This makes them take a particularistic approach toward the fruits of modern technology without considering the effects modern technology may have on Muslim lives. In this article it is proposed that the contextual philosophico-critical evaluation of modern technology is one of the prerequisites for defining what constitutes authentic human interest (*maṣlaḥah*). This can be done by broadening the scope of the Islamic Objectives (*maqasid al-sharī'ah*) to incorporate a critical

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The article by the same author, Raquib (2013), can be considered as a preamble to the current article.

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discourse. This involves a double hermeneutic movement between the Islamic conception of human good (*maṣlahah*) and the contextual appreciation of axiological problems in the technological progress model.

## 11.1 Introduction

Modern technology is an enterprise that has global influence, affecting almost all areas of human life and society. Technology has more practical concerns than science. Joseph C. Pitt (2011, p. 86) explored the role of technological infrastructure for the growth of scientific knowledge. Scientific knowledge gained for the sake of practical implementation in the research and development of technological artefacts can be described as technological knowledge. Scientific research is today most often done in a technological context, that is, in developing certain artefacts and practical solutions to human issues. The term techno-science is thus often used in the post-Enlightenment era instead of technology to show the interdependence of the two. If technology shapes scientific knowledge about the world, it becomes central in developing our perceptions and expectations of the world. Thus, human actions including ethical decisions and choices are highly influenced by the technological worldview.

According to Winner (1986, p. 6), since technologies provide structure to human activities, they not only aid human activities but reshape them and their meanings, creating new activities with new ways of defining the good, the self and the community. Habits, perceptions, concepts of self, space, time, social relationships and ethical-moral decisions are restructured through technological development. For instance, when a sophisticated new technique or instrument is adopted in medical practice, it transforms not only what doctors do but also the ways people think about health, sickness and medical care. What we consider as technological devices condition social and moral life. They change the condition of human existence: the worldview, social practices, institutions, values and modes of living.

Human beings cannot influence the technological worldview by merely refusing to adopt technological artefacts after they have been created. An active human response is needed at a cultural-social level to guide the development of technologies and the selection of appropriate technological possibilities that should be actualised. According to Pitt (2011, p. 3), ‘the ability to select those technologies I want to be associated with is important to who I am and who I will become’.

It is difficult to be truly active in making technological choices today when technological devices are most often imposed on us, forcing us, in many ways, to adapt to them if we wish to survive in the contemporary world, despite being fully aware of their harmful implications. Some people might be willing to give up automobiles that have high levels of energy consumption, or some technological gadget, for an environmental cause. However, it is extremely difficult to give up altogether the idea of owning a personal vehicle (Pitt 2011, p. 7). The reason is that, in contemporary technological culture, technological choices are interconnected with individual and



social lives in such a way that by renouncing some technological devices that are detrimental to one's worldview, one simultaneously loses the opportunities that are conducive to the attainment of one's objectives. New technological devices have been assessed, by Muslim scholars and jurists, for their efficiency, ability to make profit, convenient service and response to an immediate need, without due consideration for the broader significance of those devices. Effects such as environmental degradation or increased consumerism are often considered undesired side effects, whereas in reality they are the inevitable consequences of the logic of efficiency and consumption operating behind technological design and development.

## 11.2 Contemporary Technology

Technology has been defined and described variously, in accordance with the perspective from which it is being defined and the purpose the definition is supposed to serve. For instance, from an engineering perspective the definition of technology will appear different than that adopted from a humanities perspective. For the purpose of the current study, it is important to understand technology in ways that show the breadth of the technological enterprise and its interconnection with ethical values, especially with the overall cultural and social ideals about suitable human ends and purposes that are the driving force for technological advancement.

One of the ways technology has been defined is the 'totality of means employed by a people to provide itself with the objects of material culture' (Winner 1977, pp. 8–9). This definition is important as it shows technology to be a 'totality of means', something significant in that this research proposes to argue later that technology, understood in its proper sense, *is* a means. Any attempts implicit or explicit that serve to convert the technological means into ends reflect a cultural malady, a sign of inability to articulate any higher cultural or social goals. This definition, however, does not cite social and value aspects of culture, in addition to material culture, to which contemporary technology has a good deal to contribute. It has often been the case that due to an insufficient understanding of the relationship of technology with ethics, technical solutions have been put into effect for problems that were moral or political in nature. This definition also does not throw much light on the specific nature of modern technology which differs from premodern technologies.

Since the onset of modernity, technology has penetrated all domains of human activity to the extent that everything has some outward or inward, direct or indirect, connection with technology. As contemporary technology is the most predominant human activity that shapes cultures today, it is worthwhile for the purposes of this study to look at it as a late modern or postmodern phenomenon. This specific form or philosophical underpinning of modern or postmodern technology is the cause of many problems pointed out by philosophers and cultural and social critics. It is more correct to call our contemporary technology postmodern because it displays an absence of foundational ethics. Modern technology was initially aimed at

humanist goals, like ameliorating human ills. Our contemporary age is, however, characterised by the abandonment of these goals along with a failure of modern science and technology to provide foundational epistemological or ethical principles. For the present analysis, technology is considered as postmodern and an expression of disenchantment with modern aims and objectives with regard to technology. Postmodern technology might also signify an attempt to come up with a technology emphasising only efficiency and maximisation. This postmodern technology needs to be informed by another worldview and value framework.

Technology is value laden through its function which is related to a purpose or value (Hofmann 2006, p. 6). Being value laden, however, does not mean that technology is imperative and reduces our ethical responsibility (Hofmann 2002a). Rather, it reinforces human responsibility, even at the design level, to judge whether the values informing design are worthwhile. Failing to assume this responsibility results in the technological imperative where technology starts to direct our goals, enforcing its own values – becoming autonomous and self-perpetuating – and resulting in applications contrary to human interests. Only within the postmodern nihilistic paradigm does the technological imperative become operational because there is no vantage point or ethical values or foundation to specify goals for which technologies act as means.

Hofmann (2006, p. 6) brings examples from biotechnology to show the value-laden character of modern technology:

When we create technology, we simultaneously make choices about values. If we produce respirators and bacteriological weapons, then this implies that being able to sustain artificial respiration and to subdue people by making them sick are worthwhile goals. Ignoring such an implication can lead to technology establishing values in a covert manner. The introduction of technology can be a promotion of underlying values.

Modern technology thus promotes particular values through its function: it is good to artificially maintain respiration. The same is true for artificial reproductive technologies (ART), the presence of which has made infertility into a disease that needs to be remedied by IVF and other methods. The possibilities created by ART have been a cause of ethical dilemma in the Muslim context, apparently because of this value function of technology. Since ART have not been developed through an Islamic Objectives' (*maqāṣid*) framework, when they are adopted in Muslim societies, a conflict of values and purpose is often witnessed (Clarke 2009).

Technology is a creative process like art and symbolises human aims and inspirations. The character of technology represents the character of a specific human civilisation from where it sprung and the foundation of technological enterprise is to be found in that civilisation's underlying values. The incorrect substitution of the premodern understanding of technology as an instrument has made our technological culture instrumentalist where the principle of efficiency reigns supreme. Christians (2002, p. 43) thinks that the traditional instrumentalist paradigm (considering technology as means toward predefined ends) is insufficient as it only questions specific features or products of modern technology, whereas in reality it is required to question the whole technological phenomenon. He thinks Heidegger's

explanation to be more accurate in his articulation of our human condition within the technological lifeworld. According to Heidegger (Christians 2002, p. 44) 'the meaning of technology is not rooted in satisfying human needs, but in our concern to stake out existence'.

The foundations for modern technology were originally designed in and for a secure Enlightenment world with more settled meanings. The Enlightenment worldview has now collapsed leaving us without any solid moral foundation in the West to direct the growth of modern technology. The resulting pace of technological advancement is too fast even by modern standards and has gone beyond the modern presumptions and ideals. The contemporary practice of technology can thus rightfully be called postmodern in the sense of being chaotic and fragmented. Postmodern *telos* is in fact having no *telos*. In the absence of proper ends in a postmodern world, technological *telos* turns into the moral arbitrator. According to Waters (2006, p. 30):

The pervasive materialism and violence of late modernity stems from its inability to embrace fully a world purged of any purpose and permanence, and therefore any resulting providential or progressive trajectories. The rapid development of various technologies merely amplifies the predicament. ... A postmodern *telos* of no *telos* offers modernity a way out of its dilemma... The radical plasticity of the postmodern orientation is attained because its *telos* is also its *techne*... The postmodern *telos* of no *telos* is in fact a *telos* of *techne*.... *techne* becomes *telos* with the recognition that the world's only underlying and universal feature is information. Since information has no inherent meaning it can be recast, conveyed and interpreted in virtually endless arrays.

'Postmodern' here refers to loss of modern belief and optimism in liberal secular humanism and the associated ideals of meliorism and progress. In the midst of moral uncertainties, 'creativity itself is...the only appropriate object of postmodern worship and piety' (Waters 2006, p. 97).

Postmodernism is modernism stripped of teleology....The modernist faith in progress has been undermined in the postmodern world. Yet the drive to innovate that fired the engines of progress has been intensified and accelerated. Innovation now constitutes an end in itself, unencumbered with the baggage of final purposes, ultimate goals, or cosmic designs for humankind. (Thiele 1997, p. 491)

This postmodern reality is diametrically opposed to the Islamic reality in which human self and values, both cosmic and human, have absolute dimensions. This view has ontological repercussions for the direction of purification (*tazkiyah*) of human selves as well as epistemological implications for the growth direction of scientific and technological knowledge. According to Schultze (2002, pp. 118–119), modern technology enables people to reconstruct the self and the world and makes possible new ways of thinking, perceiving and social experiencing. Thus, it affects selfhood and the construction of meaning. Information technologies, for instance, offer many identities. The multiplicity of identities leads to the weakening of all separate identities, turning all identities subjective and disposable in the process. Religious tradition, contrastingly, stabilises our identities within religious or faith communities (Waters 2006, p. 132).

Leaving the early modern idea of attaining human progress through the use of efficient technology, postmodern technology has turned toward transcending human limitations (Davis 2006). Despite being dissatisfied with the goal of unlimited progress and realising that it was an unrealistic ideal, people in late modernity still did not want to put brakes on technological advancement and industrialisation. With the premodern (classical and religious) idea of human progress, as the ascent of the human soul, now being discredited, there were no longer any civilisational objectives to be pursued other than perfecting technology. Winner (1986, p. 5) wrote that in the twentieth century it was taken for granted that new machines, instruments and techniques would improve the human condition despite their known accompaniment of environmental and social problems. The link between technical development and human well-being is still there in current times. It has to do with the idea of progress that got currency with industrialisation and is reflected in the extensive application of technology in all aspects of life connected to the myth of progress (Hofmann 2002b, p. 22). Progress is believed to be an end in itself, and technology appears to be its chief vehicle.

In the absence of a normative consensus over shared ends, efficiency assumes the shape of a norm. Heidegger, Ellul and Illich argued that technology fundamentally transforms activities that have been regulated by tradition and human values: 'The content of the choices made under the rule of efficiency is less important than the fact that efficiency criteria play a role in making those choices' (Ibid., p. 24).

This is a reductive view of human purpose which shows that in a technological culture the final value resides in technological progress. Rivers (2005) argued that the term 'progress' denotes advancement toward a higher or better condition. Change for the sake of change does not qualify as progress until real gain has been brought about as a result of that change. If one has a criterion above mere efficiency and speed, it is difficult to equate technological advancement with human progress. Rivers gives the example of automobiles in which case, with the accompanying pollution, it is difficult to judge whether they contributed to progress or not. Moral progress is not the same as technological progress. But due to a firm belief in technological progress, even if the results brought about by technological developments are often harmful and self-defeating, technological advance is not abandoned. Muslim jurists often show a similar optimism toward technological progress.

Technological progress is a specific modern notion of progress, but Rivers points out that if anything is termed 'improvement' or 'progress', it must be asked from which perspective it is considered an improvement. For instance, if rainforests are cut down to make room for more grazing land for cattle and it ultimately leads to desertification, the short-term increase in produce does not represent real improvement. The same goes for many other agricultural and medical technologies that ultimately produce more harm than good. An integrated look at the phenomenon of contemporary technological development demonstrates that it is not easy to equate technological growth with progress unless technological progress acquires the status of an article of faith and perpetual perfection of technological means is adopted as the civilisational objective.

Contemporary technology becomes the end to which we adapt our lives and with which we measure our humanness and quality of human lives. Winner (1977, pp. 229–231) calls this phenomenon ‘reverse adaptation’ where human ends are adapted to the characteristics of the available means. Instead of applying technology as a means to pre-given goals, we adapt our values and goals to technology itself. When technology becomes the end, its associated instrumental features of efficiency and speed become the cultural and moral norm applicable to all matters of human activity like pleasure, leisure, learning and communication. Speed is an instrumental value in technical operations that is taken in a technological culture to be admirable in itself. In all spheres of life, the faster becomes the superior and virtuosity is understood as instrumental. Winner provided the example of reading as an instrumental activity where it is done not for insight or thoughtful reflection but as an end to store the maximum amount of information in minimum time – a phenomenon we witness regularly on the Internet and social media. The activity of reading is transformed to adapt to the fast technological means through which it is done.

The phenomenon of purposeless technology without any specific ends, only developed for its own sake, is clearly visible in medical and information technologies. According to Hofmann (2006, pp. 1–2) this phenomenon has been termed as technology-generating demands and technology-seeking problems to apply its solutions. Electronics and medical technology are often developed for no specific external ends. Millions of dollars are spent later to find uses and applications for such technologies. This phenomenon of technological means without ends is suggestive of a cultural situation characterised by moral relativism and the absence of an agreed-upon ethical foundation. Despite having achieved immense power to create technology, there is no moral framework to determine meaningful ends toward which this power should be steered. In Jonas’ (1984, p. 23) articulation, ‘we shiver in the nakedness of a nihilism in which near-omnipotence is paired with near-emptiness, greatest capacity with knowing least for what ends to use it’.

In the field of healthcare technology, instead of patient outcome and well-being, technical performance and diagnostic accuracy have become the sought-after ends (Hofmann 2002b, p. 24). Technological healthcare thus leads to overtreatment and medicalisation. It is not health and well-being that is the end, but the successful use of medical technology in diagnosing and treating the disease, the disease that may also in a way be created by technology and its applications (Hofmann 2003, pp. 412–413). Modern technology promotes itself as a value, contesting the value of benefiting human beings.

Modern technology creates activities that cause constant distraction and a consumerist way of life, hence removing us from an appraisal of reality, preventing spiritually focused lives. Too much involvement with technological means benumbs human beings, inhibiting the development of critical skills, acute sense of judgement and the ability for integration and synthesis of information. It is assumed that modern technology gives us more time to think about ourselves by freeing more of our time for reflection. The paradox is that modern technology and the accompanying calculative rationality overwhelm us and we become preoccupied with the very devices and techniques.

Christians (2002, p. 44), who criticised modern technology for the same reason, thinks that media technologies are foremost in promoting a heedless, consumerist way of life without any critical self-examination and understanding of reality. This creates inauthentic humanness. According to Christians, the greatest problem with modern technology is not the issues of environmental degradation and technological warfare that have been caused by it, but the lack of authentic humanness:

Media technologies are especially powerful mechanisms for constructing inauthentic humanness. ... Our threat does not come in the first instance from lethal machines and the apparatus of technology. Our authentic humanness is being leveled and reduced. There is not merely a technological problem that needs fixing, but an ontological condition from which we need emancipation. The crisis we face is not technology per se, but a technological understanding of being. (Christians 2002, p. 44)

Thiele (1997) considered spiritual lethargy to be a characteristic of postmodernity where technological novelty is constantly demanded by postmodern individuals. This novelty, in turn, makes demands on them. Thiele referred to Heidegger's writings to illuminate the nature of modern technology. According to Heidegger, the drive for endless technological innovation and economic growth in the postmodern culture reflects profound boredom with the human condition. This boredom, which is an existential condition (*ennui*), reflects the loss of meaning in the postmodern world.

The constant flurry of creation and innovation becomes an existential defence against thoughtful anxiety that prompts human beings to delve into questioning the purpose of their contingent lives. Modern technological hyperactivity, displayed in the rapid production and consumption of commodities, information, media and transportation, is a way of ensuring that no moment is left for any disquieting thoughts regarding human self and life in general. Technological society institutionalises this constant supply of novelty to help us escape the boredom resulting from the absence of any final goals whatsoever. Modern technological applications facilitate the avoidance of encountering ontological questioning through activities that both distract and overstimulate. People need to kill time and alleviate the discomfort of moral emptiness and boredom. The postmodern individual of today has no more time for anything, and yet, when he or she has free time, it seems too long. These long periods of time must be killed by whiling them away through pastimes. Leisure or idleness must always be filled by some form of consumption whether it is food, merchandise, entertainment, recreation or information (Thiele 1997, p. 513). Modern technology does the job well in providing all such distractions in abundance. Thiele (1997, p. 512) provided the example of video games to show the interdependence of postmodern nihilism and modern technology.

### 11.3 Islam, Muslims and Modern Technology

Muslim thinkers, scholars and policymakers have stressed the evolution of the Shari'ah according to changing needs. Muslim scholars and jurists often respond to technological innovations once they have already been introduced into Muslim

societies. Even then the assessment of technologies is usually undertaken in a piecemeal fashion. Currently no intellectual-ethical framework is used by Muslim scholars to direct the technological endeavour and determine appropriate technological goals in Muslim societies. In the absence of a coherent value system to anchor technological choices, Muslim scholars and jurists have no option but to analyse technology-related questions on a case-by-case basis. This usually results in incoherence. A concatenated Islamic approach to technology is important to resist technology becoming the criterion or standard of 'the good life' (*ḥayāt al-ṭayyibah*). The technological choices and solutions in a Muslim society and culture need to be of an inclusive nature. This is because the Islamic idea of human welfare includes both individual and societal welfare. Muslims need a technological environment where having the freedom to choose amongst various technological means, all available options are evaluated on the basis of the Islamic idea of well-being or progress.

#### **11.4 Relevance of Islamic Jurisprudence (*Fiqh*) and Objectives (*Maqasid*) of the Sharī'ah**

Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) is the mechanism of comprehending and interpreting a given situation for the application of the Sharī'ah. The principles and objectives of Islamic jurisprudence remain very much constant, but the details might change to meet the changing demands. In both classical and contemporary Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) literature, the field of the principles of jurisprudence (*uṣūl al-fiqh*) is believed to carry the principles and directives for analysing new situations and inferring appropriate rulings. The principles of the jurisprudence approach rely mainly on analogical reasoning (*qiyās*) for solving new problems and situations – by referring to solved paradigmatic cases in the Scriptures (Qur'an and Sunnah). The understanding and discovery of the correct cause or *ratio legis* ('*illa*) of the textual precedent is central in this methodology, which is then applied to the case at hand.

This method is not sufficient for understanding and evaluating issues that are of a deeper nature, such as modern technology, where one cannot hope to answer questions of a complicated nature, by merely making use of analogy. In order to thoroughly investigate modern technology, from an Islamic standpoint, one needs to understand the philosophy of modern technology and its ethical-cultural underpinnings. For a task of this complexity, the intellectual, ethical and legal tools of the Objectives *maqasid* of Sharī'ah would seem more suited as it contains the required conceptual comprehensiveness and universality. The scope of the Objectives goes beyond that of the *ratio legis* ('*illa*), and the discovery and application of Objectives is not subject to the same formal technicalities which the principles of jurisprudence (*uṣūl al-fiqh*) apply to the identification of the '*illa* for determining the Sharī'ah perspective on specific issues (Kamali 2011, pp. 265–266). Shatibi (d. 1388) is considered the main articulator of the Objectives' (*maqasid*) approach as a new methodological paradigm to replace the use of analogy in cases where analogical

reasoning tends to be restrictive. Reading the Objectives from the Scriptures involves a quest for broader meanings and common conceptual denominators.

According to Muhammad al-Zuhayli (b. 1932), the Objectives (*maqasid*) are ‘the ultimate goals, aims, consequences and meanings, which the *Sharī‘ah* has upheld and established through its laws, and consistently seeks to realise, materialise and achieve them at all times and places’ (cited in Kamali 2011, p. 249). In recent years, researchers have explored the relevance of the Objectives in areas such as criminal law, family law (Duderija 2014), Islamic finance (Dusuki and Abdullah 2007), genetic engineering (Bouzenita 2010), human rights (Johnston 2007; Moosa 2002; Safi 2010), international relations (Ra’ees 2010) and environment and urban design (Winkel 2011). The use of the Objectives’ methodology in these diverse fields suggests that the traditional methodologies of principles of jurisprudence (*uṣūl al-fiqh*) and independent reasoning (*ijtihād*) are insufficient for modern enterprises such as techno-science. The Objectives contrastingly are ‘goals and purposes that look to the future and permit innovative approaches to the *Sharī‘ah* and contemporary issues’ (Kamali 2011, p. 246).

The primacy of textual authority in the form of text-derived *ratio legis* was meant to prevent wrong interpretation and words drifting away from their original presuppositions. In the words of Sherman Jackson, not emphasising the form would have resulted in interpreting away the command to amputate the hands of thieves ‘by those whose inherited notions of God preempted the possibility that He might actually sanction literal amputation’ (cited in Winkel 2011, p. 308). Aiming to preserve the original value presuppositions of the Scriptures, too much use of formal analogy resulted in preserving the form at the cost of substance. The replacement of the formal analogical method with the theory of Objectives is, however, not a prescription sufficient in itself. This is because if the Objectives are used in a superficial manner – not taking note of the interdependence between different aspects of human life – they will not bear results any different from the analogical method.

When new terms such as technology, cloning or genetic engineering – having no literal referent in Islam – reach Muslim scholars, they evaluate them on the basis of Objectives. The reason why many contemporary scholars of a conservative bent, such as the Fiqh Academy in Jeddah, are pro-technology is due to the uncritical use of the Objectives. For example, they will approve the use of ‘cheap medication through genetic engineering in plants’ as this will lead to the preservation of life which is one of the primary Objectives of Islam. However, because of not connecting the question of medication to other larger questions such as the monopolisation of the world economy by a few multinational companies and an analysis of the injustice inherent in the global economic system, they fail to apply the Objectives in a comprehensive manner (Winkel 2011, p. 309). In the words of Bouzenita: ‘the ultimate objectives of the *maqāsid* can only be obtained by a whole-scale implementation of the same’ (cited in Winkel 2011, p. 310). Without revamping the economic system, all technology, including genetic technology, will serve an unjust system, without benefiting humanity at large.

The preceding example shows that the Objectives’ approach does not automatically help one reach the required level of analysis. In the absence of an in-depth



analysis, in which all relevant elements are well linked together, the focus shifts from the bigger picture of an unjust and monopolistic capitalistic system to a superficial legality of genetic engineering. In a similar manner, Muslim jurists often allow the use of particular technologies by referring to the Objectives, such as the protection of life and lineage as a basis, thus allowing many agricultural, health and reproductive technologies. In such cases, although the Objectives are implemented in form, the substance of Islamic values of justice, moderation and balance often fails to become realised. Knowledge of contemporary critical philosophy and sociology of technology is thus essential to engage in an ethical-legal appraisal of modern technology. A philosophical and ethical approach to the question of technology will serve to plumb the depths of the technological problem, so that the Objectives evaluation does not remain cursory. Engaging the contemporary social sciences has been suggested by one prominent Objectives (*maqasid*) thinker, Mohammad Tahir el-Mesawi, and is furthered by some of the works covering the Objectives (Winkel 2011, p. 311).

Kamali (2011, pp. 256–257) has argued that the understanding of what constitutes human good *maṣlaḥah* is often circumstantial and liable to change according to the social-historical context. Therefore, the Objectives, due to their quality of constancy and permanence, stand a degree above human good *maṣlaḥah*. The Objectives are the ultimate purposes that are to be served and that have a textual grounding in the Qur'an and the Sunnah. In the present author's view, if technology maintains a central place in realising human good (*maṣlaḥah*) in the contemporary technological culture, then a substantive conception of human good drawn from a holistic reading of the Objectives is required. This is needed in order to prevent technology assuming the status of the ultimate objective instead of acting as a means toward predefined religious or Shari'ah Objectives. If the Shari'ah Objectives signify the final ends or goals, then modern technology could only be considered as constituting human good if and only if it can serve as a means toward the attainment of those Objectives.

## 11.5 Objectives' (*Maqasid*) Framework of Technological Development

The new Objectives (*maqasid*) articulated herein within the objectives' framework of technological development will ultimately fall within the older classification of the five Objectives to preserve religion, life, intellect, wealth and progeny. However, these new objectives could be a source of emphasising certain latent aspects of the five classical Objectives that are relevant for a late modern technological context. Looking at the five classical Objectives, one can see that the preservation of life already includes preserving lineage because, without procreation and good physical and psychological care of children, human beings cannot survive for long. Similarly, the preservation of wealth is also a necessity for preserving human life. Still, wealth

and progeny have been mentioned separately to establish their significance as Objectives. The preservation of intellect is also included in the preservation of human life and wealth, since insanity leads to the harming of life and wealth, and sound intellect is required for generating and using wealth in a reasonable way. However, the preservation of intellect was also given a separate place in the classical list of Objectives. This shows not only the way different Objectives overlap and interconnect but also the possibility of adding new objectives to the existing list or unfurling hereto unstated dimensions of the existing Objectives for developing an Islamic ethical framework of technology.

The Objectives' (*maqasid*) framework has been used in the reformist discourse for justifying legal change, especially in the areas of human rights and gender equality (see Moosa 2002; Johnston 2007; Ramadan 2009). The Objectives' reasoning, however, does not necessarily liberalise Shari'ah in all instances. In some cases, the Objectives' reasoning can lead to a more restrictive ethics than would have been possible in its absence. If a jurist is looking at preserving and protecting fundamental Objectives, he or she becomes cautious, since allowing many permissible things could lead to the corruption of the fundamental Objectives (see March 2011, pp. 362–363). The principle of blocking the means (*sadd al-dharā'i*) to harm and corruption is then used to block things the jurist sees as harmful to religion, intellect or other fundamental objectives.

New means, like technology, are generally seen as promoting human good (*maṣlahah*) and being conducive for advancing the Objectives of preserving religion, life, intellect, wealth and progeny. Looking from the perspective of blocking the means (*sadd al-dharā'i*), technological progress could be considered to have enormous potential for harming these objectives. In the same way that the Objectives' reasoning could be used to enlarge the category of protecting the intellect (*hifẓ al-'aql*) to include self-determinacy (Winkel 2011, p. 309), it could also be used to criticize modern technology for the creation of certain information, communication and entertainment, a great portion of which is damaging to human reason and intellect.

An Objectives-oriented appraisal of modern technology is highly called for, since contemporary Western civilisation, which is dominating the world today, is centred on the ideas of growth, development and progress. Progress, both individual and social, is equated with material, technological progress. Material prosperity and technological progress are not equally matched by moral strength and excellence of character. According to Bakar (2011, p. 291) modern progress is:

literally found side-by-side with material deprivation and poverty at all levels of collective existence. At the global level, the disparity between the very rich and the very poor nations is so wide that not only is it religiously and morally repugnant, but also politically and economically undesirable. Similarly, at the level of the nation-state, the gulf separating the rich citizens and the poor ones is getting wider than ever, so much so that it has posed numerous social and moral problems of a very serious nature.

Having a clear understanding of the ethically problematic nature of modern technology, Muslims can use the Objectives' model for putting forward solutions to the problems of the contemporary technological civilisation. The present proposal has thus an 'Islamic' yet universal approach to the study of the ethics of technology that relies on works from various philosophical, cultural and religious backgrounds. An objectives-oriented techno-ethics should address the particular needs of Muslim societies, as well as the universal and global needs of the whole human community.

The current approach taken for assessing the ethical presumptions underlying modern technology uses the concepts of Objectives (*maqasid*) and human good (*maṣlahah*) in an expansive manner to make these concepts applicable. A tentative list of techno-ethical objectives is provided, which would provide a model according to which further objectives could be contextually discovered from the revealed sources of the Qur'an and the Sunnah. How well modern technology fares before those objectives would determine how far it contributes to human progress and well-being.

## 11.6 Sharī'ah Objectives (*Maqasid*) and Human Good (*Maṣlahah*) Relationship

The theoreticians (*uṣūliyyūn*) who have studied the Objectives of the Sharī'ah came to the conclusion that the Sharī'ah was revealed for the benefit and interest of humankind and for removing all sources of harm and evil (Raysuni 2006, p. xxv). This intention of providing benefit and preventing harm constitutes the human good and well-being (*maṣlahah*). According to Abu Zahra (d. 1974), human good, as common public good or welfare, has always been considered one of the sources of articulation of the Objectives of Sharī'ah, leading to specific laws and regulations (cited in AbdelKader 2003, p. 170).

Since the preservation of life, property and the promotion of Islamic mores come within the scope of the Objectives, it shows that human good (*maṣlahah*) is constituted by those actions and decisions that promote the Objectives. Because human good is something the understanding of which is not left to the discretion of human intellect, but through the light of the Scriptures (Qur'an and Sunnah), human good is understood to inhere in the preservation and enhancement of the Objectives. Kamali (2008, p. 3) also uses the two as being interchangeable. Ibn Ashur explained the supreme Objective (*maqṣad*) of Sharī'ah as the achievement of 'well-being and integrity' (*maṣlahah*) and the prevention of 'harm and corruption' (*mafsadah*) (Attia 2007, p. 102).

This understanding is not without classical precedent. Al-Ghazzali analysed the underlying Objectives of Sharī'ah to show that they constituted human welfare and thus needed to be considered the source for legal rulings. He was 'explicit in linking God's purpose in revealing His law [i.e. the Sharī'ah Objectives] to people's

*maṣlaḥah* in this world' (Opwis 2010, p. 67). Al-Ghazzali defined human good in a tangible way, as preserving the five basic elements of human life which also comprise Objectives of the Sharī'ah (Opwis 2010, p. 67). The Objective (*maqṣad*) of Sharī'ah is to promote people's well-being by preserving for them their religion (*dīn*), life (*nafs*), intellect ('*aql*), progeny (*nasl*) and property (*māl*). According to Opwis (2010, p. 78), Al-Ghazzali provided 'undisputed validity to the concept of *maṣlaḥah*', by defining it as the 'purpose of the law (*Sharī'ah*)'. Shatibi, the main articulator of the Objectives, stated that God intends through His rulings the preservation of the Objectives of the Sharī'ah. The purpose of the Sharī'ah is to preserve people's necessities (*darūriyyah*), needs (*ḥājjiyyah*) and improvements (*taḥṣīniyyah*) (Opwis 2010, p. 259). Shatibi enlisted the five cited Objectives as 'inevitable for establishing the mundane and religious' (cited in Opwis 2010, p. 259) good (*maṣāliḥ*). The Sharī'ah is therefore meant to preserve the well-being (*maṣāliḥ*) of people, which is the purpose (*maqṣad*) of revealing the Sharī'ah.

*Maṣlaḥah* can be translated as interest, good, benefit or utility (Auda 2008, p. 120). *Maṣlaḥah* is derived from the Arabic consonant roots s-l-h meaning 'being and becoming good' (Salvatore 2007, p. 156). *Maṣlaḥah* can also be translated as well-being, but since this article presents a critique of the notion of the good life embedded in the current technological model, the writer prefers to translate *maṣlaḥah* as the human good to highlight the central relevance of this concept in determining an Islamic techno-ethical ideal in contrast to the current model of technological progress. It is generally translated as public interest, but the translation closer to the meaning is well-being, welfare and social good (Opwis 2005, p. 182). The author has used the term *maṣlaḥah* in the sense of overall well-being and welfare of human beings inclusive of their religious, spiritual and moral well-being. The term 'public interest' is not used as it is restrictive. The terms benefit and interest are better translated as *manfa'ah*. *Maṣlaḥah* pertains to social good in a way that is inclusive of individual well-being and personal development. Many Islamic injunctions address and deal with individual moral upliftment and treat it as an essential ingredient to curbing social ills, as evidenced in the Qur'anic verses and Prophetic sayings (*aḥādīth*). It is important for the purpose of this study to emphasise the holistic welfare dimension of the term to understand its ramifications for gauging technological progress and welfare.

*Maṣlaḥah* is a juridical notion but is tied to the theological debate whether human reason has the ability to know the good and bad, especially pertaining to those moral problems for which no direct guidance is available in the Qur'an and the Sunnah. It is different from the idea of plain utility as it links the good in this world to that in the Hereafter. For instance, the acts of worship (*'ibādāt*) earn pleasure of God, but also prevent mischief and hence bring about individual and social benefits of the world and blessings in the Hereafter. Socially, it does not limit human welfare to tangible, material aspects alone (Salvatore 2007, pp. 156–157).

It is significant to understand the concept of *maṣlaḥah* as holistic and all-encompassing to differentiate it from the reductive utilitarian notions of human welfare that mostly inform the development of modern technology today. When it is said that the Sharī'ah on the whole aims at securing the *maṣlaḥah* of human

beings, it means securing their benefit and protecting them from harm, corruption and evil. According to Kamali (2006, p. 29), Shatibi also mentioned human good (*maṣlahah*) as the 'only overriding objective of *Sharī'ah*, which is broad enough to comprise all measures that are beneficial to the people, including the administration of justice and *'ibādāt*'. Shatibi does not restrict worldly interests to only material ones. In his comprehensive understanding, *maṣlahah* is anything that 'supports human life and well-being and ensures that people obtain whatever they need in the physical and non-physical dimensions, thereby enabling them to experience blessing on all levels' (Raysuni 2006, p. 224). Benefit thus includes physical, emotional, intellectual and religious/spiritual benefits. Human beings are short sighted, and in their limited vision, they might prefer worldly goods over spiritual enhancement. This is the reason why *maṣlahah* is to be understood and judged in the light of *Sharī'ah*, not leaving the evaluation of good to human will and desires.

The Objectives, although inductively inferred from the rules of *fiqh*, tend to capture the subtle, significant and wise purposes that are embodied in the Islamic texts (Qur'an and Sunnah). These objectives could be used to construct the Islamic world view which could become a frame of reference for human experience (Auda 2008, p. 201), a worldview defined by Auda (2008, p. 202) as the 'mental framework and sense of reality through which people view and interact with the outside world'. These objectives also represent the fundamental individual and social values that Islam embodies as a social-ethical-religious worldview. The *Sharī'ah* Objectives that Muslim jurists and theoreticians (*uṣūlīyūn*) have identified also serve to express the Islamic vision of an ethical life. The Objectives, interpreted for the contemporary context, can act as the Islamic ethical standard or framework for evaluating technological progress, setting parameters and putting limits to unchecked and unregulated technological advancement that has become an end in its own right and a source for defining what constitutes a good life for human beings. If we take social values, moral choices and beliefs about progress as informing technological design and development, then, in an Islamic context, the Islamic objectives could determine those values and morals that should inform technological innovation and design and the ends they ought to serve. It is the introduction of this dimension to the discourse on objectives that is needed to assess technological culture and develop an alternative framework.

## 11.7 The Objectives' Model

This section articulates how the Objectives of *Sharī'ah* can be understood and applied within the context of a technological culture in order to formulate some broad features of an Objectives-oriented Islamic ethics of technology. The aim is to use the theory of 'Objectives' to develop an Islamic ethical model that is well supplemented by a comprehensive understanding of the metaphysical, intellectual and cultural nature of the contemporary technology. This requires an elucidation of how the Objectives and the associated concepts of essentials, needs and enhancements

may be interpreted for the contemporary social, cultural, economic and environmental context and their scope expanded to provide solutions to techno-ethical dilemmas. The need for a contextual interpretation and application of the Objectives will be discussed in order to make them relevant for a late modern technological culture.

There have been voices calling for rethinking and reconstructing the relations between science, technology and society (see Jonas 1984; Grunwald 2001; Winner 1977; Mitcham and Muñoz 2010; see also books in the series, *Synthesis Lectures on Engineers, Technology, and Society*). Muslim scholars have also raised concerns regarding the problematic nature of the current technological model (see Nasr and Iqbal 2007; Bakar 2011; Bouzenita 2010). This has been prompted by – amongst other things – climate change and the need to develop our societies in ways that are more sustainable (Jamison et al. 2011, p. 126).

We have seen how social critics and philosophers have been lamenting that techno-science has caused as many problems as it has solved and calling for new values and a new culture. They think that the techno-scientific development has transformed human beings solely into consumers, and to overcome this, an ethical-humanitarian concern is needed in pursuing S&T. They have called for a ‘change of consciousness’ and ‘a new way of living’ (Jamison et al. 2011, p. 127). Just as industrialism has produced human beings who are adapted to the demands of the machine, there is a realisation now that machines should be turned toward human ends and not vice versa. These outlooks are interested in sustainable development and humanitarian engineering to solve the ethical problems generated by earlier unbridled technology. Some like Forschner (2002) have questioned whether we need more technological development for social progress or a reorientation of what counts as progress and development by reflecting on what it means to be human.

This article aims to initiate the development of a religious-ethical-spiritual compass that should direct the technological enterprise toward the maximisation of human purpose and not let technology become a tool for profit maximisation and economic growth for its own sake. Unless a viable model is developed for designing technology on the basis of the values of contemplation and moderation, as well as an understanding of needs reached through a Sharī‘ah Objectives perspective, there is no end to technological innovation and growth which will continue to shape social objectives in its own image. According to Ghazzali, objectives could be religious or mundane, but anything done without objectives is done in vain and is religiously and ethically inappropriate (Al-Alam 2008, p. 15).

The Objectives-based reasoning uses induction, when inferring general principles and objectives for a late modern technological context, from a thematic reading of the texts. The application of those general objectives, within the technological culture, is not intended to be a straight process of deductively applying the general objectives to particular instances. It should and does involve complex reasoning, based on the evaluation of intended and anticipated consequences of specific technologies, while keeping in mind the interconnections of the various technologies to one another as well as to the broader sociocultural, religious-ethical, intellectual-spiritual and economic values. The technologies are to be judged and designed

according to the Islamic Objectives-oriented techno-ethical model. The objectives specifically induced for this project can as well be labelled techno-ethical objectives, since they serve the purpose of creating a goal-oriented technology according to the Islamic ethical vision. This project envisions how the more general Objectives or values of protecting religion, life, intellect, wealth and lineage can each influence the techno-ethical model while enunciating further, some specific objectives that are relevant for developing the Islamic value framework for technology. The newly articulated techno-ethical objectives ultimately fall under the older classification of five, but mentioning them separately will serve to emphasise certain latent aspects of the five classical objectives that are relevant for a late modern technological context.

Although the five Objectives have been understood by the classical scholars as being tied to each other, the interconnections amongst them have become ever more important in light of the fact that in the contemporary techno-scientific culture, technological artefacts and people have become socially and ethically intertwined so that when people adopt those artefacts, they also adapt to the ethical (or unethical) possibilities offered (Jamison et al. 2011, p. 2). This is because the technological objects function only within sociotechnical systems. Individuals – if they wish to achieve their desired goals with any particular technological device – need to adopt the whole sociotechnical system along with its ethical corollaries.

Because new technologies open new ways of understanding reality and as a result set unprecedented goals and objectives, the older classification of values and understanding of objectives needs to be reassessed. What might have been considered ethically neutral or permissible (*mubāh*) in the pre-technological context could become an ethical question if it interferes with religious principles, values or the Islamic worldview in general. For instance, seeking treatments and cure for human ailments has been understood to help in the preservation of human life. In the contemporary sociocultural context, with new medical technologies that offer immense possibilities, this could no longer be true if the values underlying these innovations are nihilistic. The technological devices in such circumstances are not neutral. Instead, by providing the mere existence of new options to act, the technology becomes morally relevant irrespective of whether someone decides to use it or not. This is visible in the case of prenatal testing for indicating any foetal anomaly that could become the basis for abortion. In the presence of these tests, parents have to make a morally informed decision whether they wish to go for the test or not. Hence, the new options for acting created by technology become morally loaded (Jamison et al. 2011, pp. 17–18). Nanotechnology, likewise, opens up a new realm of reality and creates a ‘simulated or technically mediated reality rather than the ‘natural’ reality that existed in previous centuries’ (Jamison et al. 2011, p. 124).

The case of the contraceptive pill is an example of how technological artefacts create new meanings and definitions of the good or moral life. The introduction of the contraceptive pill led to a shift in social perceptions of marriage and reproduction. Birth became regulated to the extent that ‘people are planning their lives around the proviso that a child should only come and then must also come once the desired social and economic space has been created’ (Keulartz et al. 2004, pp. 9–10).

There are fewer unintended pregnancies now, but even those few are less keenly accepted than in the past and hence the actual number of abortions has not decreased significantly. Previously, some people opted for abortion only if the pregnancy was completely unwanted. With more technological options to live a life according to one's own planning and desire, many people go for abortions even if the pregnancy was just unplanned (Keulartz et al., p. 10). The fact that people in late modern technological societies want everything to happen according to their desire and plan is clear in this example. These studies show that these new practices, made possible by new technologies, often treat people's desires and not their diseases. The fact that technological artefacts indirectly bring about broad and profound changes in our morality and mentality has been noted by Keulartz et al. (2004, p. 10), who laments the fact that the broad moral implications of technological artefacts have not been given much attention:

The example of the pill makes it clear that technological artifacts embody particular options and restrictions: they invite certain kinds of action or behavior and discourage other ones, and thus reinforce or alter existing role divisions and power structures. The normative ramifications of technological artifacts are rarely limited to the practice for which they are intended but often also filter through into associated or adjacent practices (in the case of the pill, into marriage and abortion). The significance of these insights for ethics has until now not been acknowledged sufficiently. Perhaps as a result of the anthropocentrism of traditional ethics, applied ethics has not yet opened up the black box of technological development. Though it does pay some attention to the moral problems invoked by the use of new technologies, it remains blind to the moral significance of the technology itself.

Utility from a hedonistic perspective is understood as benefit, advantage, pleasure and good (Warnock 2003). Utility is a teleological principle which states that actions are right if they produce more happiness or pleasure than the rest of possible actions and are wrong if they produce more unhappiness or pain. The idea of utility is also present in the discourse on human good. However, to allow the greatest number of people what is considered their total well-being according to the Islamic objectives' theory, there must be a hierarchy of needs that should be met through technological innovation and creativity. This well-being should be understood in a comprehensive manner which, according to the Objectives-based understanding, prioritises excelling in religious and spiritual virtue and attaining higher moral status. It also means that as a matter of policy, the objectives-based technological ethics should promote the design and manufacture of such artefacts that fulfil the basic needs and necessities of human beings before venturing out to produce and consume an array of dazzling hi-tech gadgets that contribute more toward benumbing human minds and interfering with the contemplation and conduct of a purposeful life.

Fulfilling basic human needs is fundamental to the human good (*maṣlahah*) envisioned by Islam, as well as to creating a socially just society. Promoting social justice through correct technological choices could be one important value of the Objectives (*maqāṣid*)-oriented framework of technology. Only when people are provided with the basic necessities allowing them to live at a humane level will they be able to think and ponder, giving them a chance for intellectual and spiritual growth. This is in accordance with the human good (*maṣlahah*) principle that, in



determining priorities in case of conflicting interests, 'a public interest has priority over a private one' (Shahzad 2009, p. 127; Nyazee 2000, pp. 208–12).

The Objectives-oriented values should also promote technologies that create more sustainable and environmentally friendly built structures that are protective of and provide closer interaction with the God-made natural world, which contains signs for reflection and understanding (Q. *Ya Sin* 36:33–40). The communities using sustainable methods of living will be at the same time compassionate and God-centric. Towns and cities will be designed and planned to enhance social togetherness and mutual communication and assistance. These are some of the values that could be considered and translated into action during the design process of technologies.

The benefits and harms generated by technologies are not to be evaluated on the basis of individual whims and desires because they are often misleading (Q. *al-Baqarah* 2:216). Instead, they are to be measured within the purposive lifeworld of Islamic objectives. The Islamic Objectives-based ethics of technology would thus not only look at the immediate consequences of a given technology. Rather, it would critically assess the intellectual, spiritual, ethical, social and economic outlook behind any technological innovation and vision of the good life inscribed therein.

For an Objectives-oriented ethics of technology, the Objectives could act as intrinsic values, providing the criteria for selecting and mediating between the various possible instrumental values. For instance, in the technological design of automobiles or houses, the values of comfort, ease, luxury, enjoyment, aesthetic appeal, competition and social status, environmental protection, health, safety and neighbourly relationship could be invoked. Some of these values could come into conflict with each other. For instance, if one prioritises individual comfort and luxury in a house, then one might not use sustainable materials in its construction, not build it in a way that the neighbourhood is closely knit and use air-conditioning and heating systems inside which may pose hazards to both the environment and health. On the other hand, if social well-being is given preference, then the house or the car would be built in the most natural way, being energy efficient, although the level of comfort might be less than desired. If the intrinsic objectives' values are taken to be that of fostering brotherhood in the community, bringing people closer to nature, preventing the extravagant use of resources and preserving human health, which are all essential for the religious-spiritual-ethical well-being of people, then it becomes easier to select from a list of conflicting instrumental values. Within the objectives' purview, aesthetic appeal of the house or car cannot be separated from the ethical-environmental implications. The beauty of the house or the car will not be judged independently but within the context of whether it has led to the conservation or destruction of its immediate natural environment and the environment at large. Similarly, if the lavish design of the car and house is contributing to social injustice and poverty, then the beauty of the house or the car is reduced by the suffering of the people involved. Worship of God through being aware of His signs in nature, charity and compassion for the community are the objectives' values that should inform town planning, building of houses, designing of cars and other such social-technological endeavours, on the basis of which instrumental values like speed,

efficiency and comfort are to be understood and applied. The hierarchy of individual and social necessities and needs should thus be established in the light of an Islamic objectives' ethics.

## 11.8 Objectives (*Maqasid*)-Oriented Values for Technology

Proposed here are some objectives' (*maqasidic*) values that can orient modern technology in the contemporary late modern context. These values will not constitute a completely new list of objectives. These values could be better classified as a contemporary articulation and extension of the five classical Objectives or primary values, for the current technology-dominated culture. One such value could be self-restraint (*nahā al-nafs*) that is preventing the human self (*nafs*) from unrestrained desires (*hawā*) and from transgressing the religious-spiritual-ethical limits (*taghā*) (see Q. *al-Nazi'* at 79:37–40). The self-created desires expressed in modern technology should be balanced by the objective of attaining religious-spiritual and material necessities for human beings and what is of true benefit to the human self.

The production, development and consumption of technological products should be governed not by the values of selfishness and greed for satisfying more and more sensual desires (*hawā*) but by the values of moderation and balance (Q. *al-Furqan* 25:67). The overcoming of selfishness and greed (*shuḥḥ al-nafs*) (see *al-Hashr* 59:9) is another value expressed in the Qur'an that can be translated into one of the objectives' (*maqasidic*) value for technology. These objectives are part of the Objective of protecting religion (*dīn*), since one of the main objectives of religion is to help human beings rise above the desires of the lower self in order to live a higher life of contemplation, worship, virtue and piety. Until now this main objective of combating the lowly desires had not been mentioned independently. However, the contemporary cultural context of technological consumerism demands that the objective of observing self-restraint, both on individual and community levels, be framed and highlighted, as it is pertinent to put a check to the present-day technology-induced consumerism.

The reading of the Qur'anic text in the context of the pressing social-ethical dilemmas of the contemporary technological culture leads to the realisation that such principles could be translated into an ethical theory for regulating modern technology. Human enhancement technologies are used for non-therapeutic purposes. Bio-, neuro-, gene, nano- and information technologies are in many cases not used for treating illnesses and disabilities but for enhancing human abilities and characteristics. They not only intervene with the God-made nature (*fitrah*) of human beings but also increase the levels of discontent with one's present physical state leading to unhappiness and ingratitude toward the Creator, which is against the Sharī'ah Objectives. The magnitude of resources used for the development of enhancement technologies is also too high, which if seen from the Objectives' perspective should be better spent on technologies that address the essential needs and necessities of human beings in accordance with the Objectives' value of mutual

cooperation and maintaining the dignity of human beings. The value of mutual cooperation could also positively help design technology which facilitates cooperation and harmony amongst human beings and not destruction and disruption of life (Q. *al-Nisa'* 5:2). This objectives' value, which preserves the social order of the community, can act as a preventive measure against the development of massively devastating weapons and arms.

Comprehensive and wholesome development of human beings could be another objectives' (*maqasidic*) value to guide technological development. The central Islamic objective is ensuring human good (*maṣlahah*) and righteousness (*ṣalāh*) (Ibn Ashur 2006, p. 91). The word human good (*maṣlahah*) has a connotation of wholesomeness and completeness. So far the production and consumption of modern technology is reductionist: dominated by a tendency which creates heedlessness, neglect, mental intoxication and dullness and existential meaninglessness. Information and media technology, including gaming technologies, is an ample proof of that. Such technologies undermine the Objectives' idea of human dignity (Q. *al-Isra'* 17:70). Human progress and well-being should be envisioned in terms of the development of technology that could foster intelligence, inculcate wisdom and develop intellectual and spiritual faculties and higher morals within an Islamic framework. Only with such an objective, information and communication technology can turn into beneficial knowledge ('*ilm al-nāfi'*).

The objectives' (*maqasidic*) techno-ethics will estimate innovativeness as one value for the fulfilment of the Objectives of enriching human life and intellect. This is because being innovative and creative is part of the God-given human nature and part of the human intellectual ability. The ability to innovatively solve problems is integral to human thinking. It is necessary for the survival of human life, as it helps understand and use the earthly bounties in an optimum manner. However, innovativeness will not enjoy the status of the supreme value the way it is considered in contemporary knowledge-based capitalist economies. Instead, moral rectitude (*tahdhīb*) of individuals will form the core value in an Islamic ethical framework of technology. Objectives-oriented ethics of technology will acknowledge the need for developing human creativity and innovative skills – which are God-given abilities – through innovative technological designs, but only if these can contribute toward a spiritually aware and religiously conscious life. A holistic idea of technological progress based on this comprehensive understanding should thus inform the technological paradigm and specific technologies.

What is permissible (*mubāḥ*) for an individual to have, such as a luxurious car or technological gadgets, when seen broadly, appears to be a source of intellectual, social, psycho-spiritual and environmental harm, compromising the good (*maṣlahah*) of humankind. If technology is aimless, being just an expression of human creativity or merely a source of economic growth, then from the perspective of Objectives' ethics, it could not be tantamount to true human good. Similarly, if technological production of genetically modified and processed food causes harm to human health, then, despite being innovative solutions to the global demand of food and economically profitable, such technological solutions are not compatible with overall human good. Such technological solutions not only provide the extra needed

food but also increase the human desire and want for consumption leading to unprecedentedly high levels of obesity and related diseases (see Cutler et al. 2003; Hawkes 2006). Technologies developed within the Objectives' framework would not produce similar consequences since the issue of technological production of food would not be divorced from other related social-economic-ethical factors such as the advertisement and marketing of harmful food products through the media.

As far as the environmental degradation caused by industrialisation is concerned, the objectives of upholding the balance (*mīzān*) (Q. *al-Rahman* 55:7–9) and refraining from transgression (*taḡhā*) against the limits set by God on nature, both human and nonhuman, are enough to protect the environment without needing to articulate environmental values separately. These two objectives' values, along with those of exercising self-restraint and suppression of greed, are an antidote to human impulse for constant gratification of desires: a major cause for environmental destruction. The environmental problem is predominantly the result of an economic model based on the overindulgence in desires of the human self and disrespect of the limits of creature-hood. If the processes of design and development of new technologies are supplemented by the knowledge of anticipated consequences and comply with the objectives of moderation, balance and prevention of extravagance (*isrāf*), most of the environmental problems can be avoided.

As pointed out by Chittick (2012, p. 291), environmental destruction is a result of the contemporary outlook informing technological advancement. A faulty perception of human happiness and satisfaction, which is equated with unharnessed technological consumption, negatively impacts the environment and also causes harmful consequences on physical and psycho-spiritual levels, impairing the quality of human health and lives. The objectives' value of justice acting as a foundational element of the objectives-based techno-ethics ensures the conception and development of a technology that prioritises the fulfilment of primary human needs. It would be unlike the contemporary technological model that serves to create high-profile technologies, used and enjoyed only by a handful of humanity. The objectives' value of justice also needs to be invoked for ecological preservation. It is often the case that the cost of environmental damage caused by technology is not borne by those who reap its benefits. People who are mostly affected by climate change, which takes away their lives and livelihoods, belong to the regions least involved in technological manufacturing of goods and the resultant pollution of the environment. Justice or fairness as an objectives' value for technology would demand the production of such clean and affordable technologies that are able to help meet basic needs and necessities (*darūrah*) of all people without damaging the environment, so that all human beings have an opportunity to grow intellectually, morally and spiritually, instead of bypassing those basic needs to fulfil some secondary or complementary interests that are only embellishing or ornamental (*taḥsīniyyah*) in their effect.

## 11.9 Conclusion

The Objectives' (*maqasid*) values presented above are not exhaustive but are meant to demonstrate how an objectives-oriented ethics of technology can be conceived and implemented. This writer has tried to translate the holistic interrelations between the various objectives into a unified techno-ethical framework. I have delineated some positive values like the establishment of justice, compassion, brotherhood, self-restraint, moderation, balance, intellectual and spiritual development, moral rectitude and environmental conservation and some other negative values such as selfishness, self-indulgence, greed, purposelessness and transgression. The positive values should be reinforced and the negative ones thwarted by wisely, ethically and holistically crafted technologies that serve to liberate humankind from the current meaningless cycle of innovation, consumption and dissipation of technological goods and services.

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**Part IV**  
**Tawhidic Science: General Applications**



# Chapter 12

## Islam and the Environment: An Examination of the Source Evidence

Mohammad Hashim Kamali

**Abstract** This article is presented in two parts; the first draws attention to a set of principles, beginning with that of *tawhīd* and the vision it conveys of the common predicament of man with the rest of the created world. This is followed by a review of two principles, namely, of *khalīfah*, the vicegerency of man in the earth, and the principle of trust (*amānah*). The second part addresses instances of violation of these principles in three main areas: spreading mischief (*fasād*) on earth, extravagance and waste (*isrāf*) and infliction of harm (*ḍarar*). The focus of discussion in this part is on human management, or rather mismanagement, of the earth and its resources with the result that humanity itself has become the chief victim of its own failings. The conclusion calls attention to how Islam's inclusive outlook and teachings can make a distinctive contribution to the ongoing climate change debate. The article ends with recommendations for possible reforms.

### 12.1 The Climate Change Debate: An Overview

Environmental degradation affects the whole of humanity. While no country or community is immune to or entirely accountable for the damage caused, some countries and nations are clearly the biggest polluters. It is ironical also that the latter are better equipped to take preventive and remedial measures to reduce the actual or potential damage inflicted on their economies and people. Consideration of moral responsibility and care must inform our responses to the plight of the disadvantaged among us and the manner in which we address the need to protect and repair the natural environment. Modern environmental problems have not only material but also moral and spiritual dimensions.

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The lion's share of environmental damage we witness today comes from industrial pollution, carbon emissions and abusive applications of technology and science. This is exacerbated by the untrammelled expansionist policies of the great industrial powers and the earth's biggest polluters. Oil-producing countries and companies are also opposing measures to reduce fossil fuel production, regardless of its damaging effects. The Gulf of Mexico deepwater drilling fiasco of 2010 caused an ecological crisis that spewed close to five million barrels of oil into the sea and along over 1,000 km of the shoreline. That episode brought into public scrutiny the kind of decisions big multinationals like BP make to add to their astronomical earnings! As soon as the well was capped after numerous failed attempts, the Western media started telling the public that it was not that harmful after all (Baltimore 2010, p. 18). Then barely 2 weeks later, another report quoting US scientists had it that nearly 80 % of the Gulf of Mexico oil spill was still in the water.

Climatic disasters, unprecedented winter freezes and summer heat waves are becoming more and more deadly and devastating. Crippling floods in Pakistan, devastating mudslides in China, raging forest fires in Russia and elsewhere testify to the growing extremities in weather, the destruction of ecosystems and the severity of killer floods.<sup>1</sup> The industrial West has been the biggest greenhouse emitter; China may now be the largest and Russia may be third, but no Muslim country has been listed so far in the big league. Yet one also notes that the green movement is stronger in the West than in the Muslim world, and it is civil society in the West, rather than its politicians and governments, that takes the lead in environmental awareness.<sup>2</sup> The rise of ecological psychology in the twentieth-century Western discourse originated essentially in the recognition that the free-market and techno-scientific approaches have not succeeded in sustaining ecological balance.

Parvez Manzoor (1988, p. 151) drew attention to the singular absence in Western environmental discourse of the Islamic tradition and its distinctive postures on the environment. The solution is to be found at a deeper level by rekindling the innate human affinity and respect for nature so persistently suppressed by consumerist industrial civilisations premised on indefinite growth and material progress. Economic wealth feeds our greed and spiritual insecurity. Is it any wonder, as Lionel Rubin and Adi Setia pointed out, that the age of economic progress coincides also with the age of insecurity and tension among people, the relentless drive for weapons of mass destruction that can annihilate humanity and life on earth manifold? A new economic and moral outlook will have to be entertained, one that is premised on meeting the limited needs of man rather than fulfilling his unlimited wants (Setia 2007, p. 137).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Widespread deforestation, the conversion of wetlands to farms or urban sprawl and the clogging up of natural drainage systems with garbage also exacerbate the impacts of the devastating floods. See *New Straits Times*, 20 August 2010, p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> The United States has not ratified the Kyoto Protocol, and Western governments generally took questionable postures in the Copenhagen conference.

<sup>3</sup> Cf., Lionel Rubin, *An Essay on the Nature and Significance of Economic Science* (London, 1932), quoted in Setia (2007), p. 137.

No sacred scripture has spoken about nature and the earth as much as the Qur'an – for it contains numerous guidelines about the human treatment of earth and the rest of God's creation so much so that the Qur'anic revelation intimately connects itself with the notion of sacredness of nature. A whole "eco-theology" unfolds as a result that distinguishes Islamic spirituality with characteristics of its own. The Islamic sources, mainly the Qur'an and Sunnah, reveal a set of principles that point to a rich reservoir of environmental ethics with far-reaching socio-economic and political consequences.

Are we facing a crisis? A crisis implies that a normal state has been disrupted in a dangerous direction and manner and that we are aware of it. The existence of an environmental crisis is no longer a moot, for it can be observed in global warming, which is only one aspect of it, but it is so acute that it has finally caught everyone's attention, whereas other aspects such as the extinction of many species, destruction of their habitat, deforestation, desertification and depletion of resources have often been neglected.<sup>4</sup> Industrial pollution has entered into the food chain and our bodies as well as the air we breathe and the water we drink, often manifested, even if not declared, by the proliferation of all kinds of cancers and new varieties of disease. Numerous places are on the verge of destruction – from the coral reefs of Australia to the Amazon forest. The fear that Seyyed Hossein Nasr voiced in 2005 has already become a reality that if China, India and the Muslim world were to become as industrialised as the United States and have the same rate of consumption, "then the whole ecosystem of the world will either collapse or be radically modified" (Iqbal and Nasr 2007, p. 137).

Yet the world saw, with disillusionment, the failure of the 2009 UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen (COP15) to curb carbon emissions to sustainable levels. The conference became somewhat of a political circus due to high-handed policies of powerful nations. The so-called Danish text, a document produced jointly by Denmark, the United States and United Kingdom, raised controversies with its distribution of more power to the richer nations and its sidelining of the developing world as well as bypassing the Kyoto Protocol. What infuriated the developing countries was the unequal limit per capita of greenhouse gas (or carbon) emissions the draft document proposed for developed countries at nearly twice the amount of carbon emissions permitted for developing countries.<sup>5</sup> The president of the Maldives was quoted concerning the rising temperatures that anything above 1.5° would mean that the Maldives and many small and low-lying islands would vanish. It is for this reason that "we tried very hard" to have 1.5° in

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<sup>4</sup>The twentieth century saw the disappearance of half the world's forests and the depletion of fish stocks by about two thirds. For instance, Peru's fishing was estimated at 3.5 million tonnes in 1960, increasing by 1965 to 9 million, and to 13.5 million in 1970. In 1975, it declined to 3 million and to 1.5 million in 1978 ('Abd al-Jawad 1991), p. 34.

<sup>5</sup>Delegates were left frustrated as the United States refused to agree to any binding treaty. The Copenhagen Accord was drafted by the United States and the BASIC group of countries (Brazil, China, India and South Africa). The document is not legally binding and no set decisions on emission reductions were made. China overtook the United States as the biggest emitter in 2008 and recently it was reported as the largest energy consumer.

the document, but this “was blatantly obstructed by the big-emitting countries” (Atifi 2010).

The December 2010 UN Climate Conference in Cancun, Mexico, was a step forward in that it created the Green Climate Fund to administer and transfer funds from wealthy nations to the worst-affected nations in a quest to protect forests, promote clean technologies and help reduce carbon emissions. The European Union, Japan and the United States pledged contributing US\$100 billion a year to the fund starting from 2020, along with US\$30 billion in rapid assistance. The Cancun agreement set the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions from industrial countries by 25–40 % within the next 10 years. Moreover, a Climate Technology Centre and Network is to be established to help distribute the technical know-how that can reduce emissions (New Sunday Times 2010, p. 34). Cancun was a step forward, yet the Cancun agreement too fell short of setting specific reduction commitments on carbon emissions by major industrialised countries.

The 17th UN Climate Change Summit of December 2011 in Durban, South Africa, decided to postpone a legally binding agreement on climate change, which was due to be completed in 2015, until 2020 for its implementation. This made matters worse as it ushered the climate debate into a period of uncertainty without any legally binding agreement to mitigate global warming. Mohan Munasinghe, one of the world’s leading voices on energy and environment, commented that world leaders have not taken climate change seriously. They essentially put off the decision to take action on climate change for about 10 years. But, as a scientist, “I can tell you that if we defer action until 2020, we will exceed the dangerous limit for temperature rise of two degrees Celsius” (Renganayar 2012, p. 36). Munasinghe called on businesses and civil society to become more proactive and put pressure on governments to take action before it is too late. The goal is for more than 192 member states to sign a pact in Paris by the end of 2015 to replace the Kyoto Protocol, the only global treaty on emission restrictions.

In sum, a two-decade divide between richer and poorer nations has hampered United Nations-led negotiations to draft an agreement to fight global warming. Richer nations want the less well-to-do ones, whose pollution is rising the fastest, to take a bigger role in cutting back fossil fuel emissions. Developing countries argue that their wealthier counterparts should lead the way because they are responsible for the bulk of historical emissions (Pearson 2014).

## 12.2 Divine Oneness (*Tawhīd*)

The oneness of God (*tawhīd*), a cardinal tenet of the Islamic faith, is in many ways manifested in the unity of His creation. The Qur’anic discourse typically addresses men and women and the whole of the cosmos. God’s presence in nature is vividly conveyed in the verse “Wherever you turn, there is the Face of God” (*al-Baqarah* 2:115), which means that He surrounds and permeates both the world of nature and the ambience of man in all places. From this perspective, the human being is part

and parcel of a cosmic equilibrium that must be maintained, and effort must be made to strike a balance between the material and spiritual requirements of life. Nature, in a sense, participates in the Qur'anic revelation. This sense of shared destiny and common predicament with the rest of the existential world is also manifested in the nomenclature of the chapters (surahs) of the Qur'an. The 114 surahs and the names by which they are known underline diversity and remembrance not only of God's exalted names and attributes, messengers and prophets but also the earth, fruits and bounties of the earth, plants and animals, trees, mountains and the wider worldview of the creation and beyond.<sup>6</sup> The primordial character of Qur'anic messages visualises man and the cosmos in a state of harmony that reaffirms man's inner bond with the natural world. Certain verses of the Qur'an address natural forms, plants and animals, as well as human beings. The Qur'anic view of the human soul does not regard the world of nature as its natural enemy to be conquered and subdued but as an integral part of man's religious universe sharing in his earthly life and, in a sense, even his ultimate destiny.

*Tawhīd* underlines the unicity of nature as an ecological principle and a distinctive feature of environmental science. The mineral kingdom supports the vegetable, and they in turn support the animal and there is a link of mutual dependence between them. The waste of one is made food for the other, and an innate process of cleanliness exists in the natural world. There is an infinite chain of gradation and interdependence that points to a common destiny and ultimate unity of the existential world.<sup>7</sup> Unity may be understood at various levels and domains of cosmic existence. Thus one may speak of the unity of the natural world or, on a grander scale, of the whole of the cosmos. One may also speak of the unity of living species and organisms on earth or of the unity of the human body – all of which are facets of His unique reality reflecting the various manifestations of a collective unity and interdependence.<sup>8</sup> It is clear from the Islamic perspective that the terrestrial desolation and environmental degradation from without is in many ways reflective of man's spiritual desolation from within.

Many Muslim sages saw the cosmic and ontological contents of the Qur'an and its verses and chapters, as well as the phenomena of nature and events within the soul of man, as *āyāt* (lit. "signs" or "portents") of the author of the ontological Qur'an (*al-Qur'ān al-takwīnī*) in juxtaposition with that of the written Qur'an (*al-Qur'ān al-tadwīnī*) (Nasr 1997, p. 17). The Qur'an alludes in many verses to the unmanifested and the manifested world (*'ālam al-ghayb wa'l-shahādah*). The visible or manifest world is not an independent order of reality but a manifestation of a vastly greater world which transcends it and from which it issues. The visible gradually recedes into the vast invisible which surrounds it and for which it is the veritable environment. It is in this way that the divine presence, the spirit and the

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<sup>6</sup>The names of surahs in the Qur'an thus include the Arabic equivalents of cattle, honeybees, ant, spider, cow, horse, elephant, iron, star, moon, morning, night, time, mountain, city, lightning, winds, fig, olive and so forth. See for a discussion Al-Qaradawi (2001), p. 54.

<sup>7</sup>Cf., Nasr (1964), pp. 4–5. See also Sultan Ismail (1997), p. 166.

<sup>8</sup>Cf., Bakar (2006), p. 41.

indefinable infinity permeate the world of nature and of normal humanity (Nasr 1997, p. 18). All of this depicts the Islamic worldview of a spiritually motivated appreciation of nature with important ethical implications. Science and technology can expound the means that can be used to harness nature, but religion and philosophy dictate the ends.

### 12.3 Vicegerency (*Khilāfah*)

The Arabic term *khilāfah* comes from the verbal root *khalaḥa*, meaning one who came after, inherited or succeeded another. *Khilāfah* thus implies holding a position of power, trust and responsibility that is exercised in harmony with the will of its principal party. *Khilāfah* and its plural *khilāʾif* occur in nine places in the Qurʾan, and in seven of these, it is juxtaposed by the phrase *ʾfī ʾl-ard* – “in the earth” – which signifies that its application is in relationship mainly to planet earth. In each case, a reference is made to the exercise of a certain authority that God entrusts in His noblest of creation, humankind. Adam, the archetypal man, was appointed the first *khilāfah* and, by extension, every man and woman. Each one of us then inherits power and responsibility vis-à-vis the planet earth and all its life forms.

Vicegerency confers on human beings, individually and collectively, the mission and responsibility to build the earth and harness its resources with moderation and care for its ecological balance (Q. *al-Baqarah* 2:30). Vicegerency is guided in turn by the principles of trusteeship (*amānah*), moderation (*iʿtidāl*, *wasāṭiyyah*) and justice (*ʿadl*). Building and development (*iʿmār*) with their broader physical and non-physical ramifications are another aspect of vicegerency that is informed, in turn, by the higher goals and purposes (*maqāṣid*) of Islam and its *sharʿah*. Other aspects of *iʿmār* that are highlighted in the sources include due observance of the divinely ordained cosmic equilibrium, greening the earth through agriculture (*tashjīr*, *ḍharʿ*) and cleanliness (*tahārah*) as discussed below.

Man’s vicegerency on the earth is, moreover, complemented by that of servanthship (*ʿubūdiyyah*) towards God. Man is God’s servant (*ʿabd Allāh*) and must obey Him. As *ʿabd Allāh*, he must be passive towards God and receptive of the grace that flows from Him. As *khilāfat Allāh*, he must be active in the world, sustaining cosmic harmony and disseminating the grace for which he is the channel as a result of his being the most noble of God’s creatures.

In the same way that God sustains and cares for the world, man must nurture and care for the environment in which he plays the central role. Man cannot neglect the care of the natural world without betraying the trust of vicegerency (Q. *al-Aʿraf* 7:172) as he is entrusted with authority to manage the earth in accordance with the purposes intended by its creator. Yet there is nothing more ominous for the natural environment than the practice of the power of vicegerency by a humanity which no longer accepts to be God’s servant, obedient to His commands. Islam strongly opposes this form of human self-glorification at the expense of His creation.

Vicegerency contemplates a man-earth relationship that looks towards sustainable utilisation of earth's resources. The Qur'an makes no less than 485 references to *al-ard* "the earth", mostly in the context of its relationship to human beings. The earth is described as the alma mater from which humankind is made, the place and source of their livelihood and ultimately where they end their final journey (*Taha* 20:55). A variety of expressions are employed to describe the earth. The language is generally theocentric wherein God ingratiate His human servants: "Did We not make the earth as your cradle and resting place?" (*al-Naba'* 78:6) and as "your field and couch for your comfort...endowed it with vast resources of water and pastures for you and your livestock?" (*al-Baqarah* 2:33).<sup>9</sup>

Man has inalienable biological and ecological needs for light, air, water, food, shelter and community and may utilise the resources of the earth to secure those needs but to also share them with other living creatures. The Qur'an often mentions the domestication of animals and plants as God's special favours on humankind. Then comes the reminder: "We have willed that all beauty on earth be a means by which We put people to test", to see how well they measure up and conduct themselves (*al-Kahf* 18:7).

Accountability and faithful observance of trust demand the promotion of good and the prevention of evil, building the earth and establishing a just order: "Let there be of you a nation that calls others to the good, establishes right and eradicates wrong. Such are they who shall prosper" (Q. *Taha* 20:53). Two of the broad and comprehensive principles of Islam that subsume most of these are justice and the doing of good (*adl wa-ihsān*, Q. *al-Nahl* 16:91). Acts of injustice are committed not only among humans but in the human treatment of the natural environment, acts that pollute the earth, air and water and which cause dangerous disease to humans and other life forms.

## 12.4 Trusteeship (*Amānah*)

The Qur'anic narrative on *khalīfah* began with God's decision to confer a great trust (*amānah*) on His creatures, the heavens, the earth, the mountains, the angels and mankind but they all declined to take it; only mankind accepted, due to his enormous potential for good, yet also a certain audacity on his part (*al-Ahzab* 33:72). It was due to the combination of good and evil in man that when God offered the *amānah* to him, the angels protested saying "will you place on it (earth) such as will spread corruption and shed blood – whereas it is we who extol your unbounded glory?" (*al-Baqarah* 2:30). However, God chose mankind for the task telling the angels "I know what you know not" of the enormous potential for good of the

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<sup>9</sup>Other Qur'anic references to the earth: "We vested it (the earth) with the means of livelihood for you" (7:10), blessed it and made it a safe place for you to live (41:10), richly endowed it with greenery and fruits of all kinds (22:63) and subjugated it to you to harness its resources for your enjoyment (45:13; 67:15).

progeny of Adam. Qur'an and *Sunnah* make *amānah* an integral part of the faith of a Muslim. *Amānah* is a hallmark of faithful Muslims, those who “fulfil their trusts (*amānāt*) and observe their promises and commitments” (*al-Mu'minin* 23:8). A breach of *amānah* is a grave matter as in the *hadith*: “One who betrays his *amānah* has no faith”.<sup>10</sup>

In a place where *amānah* appears in its plural form in the Qur'an (*al-Nisa* 4:58), God commands the believers to render the trusts (*amānāt*) to whom they belong. Then immediately follows the injunction “and when you judge among people you judge with justice”. Thus it appears that justice is the most important of all *amānāt* that God has entrusted to mankind. Elsewhere the injunction to do justice is juxtaposed with benevolence, beauty and perfection (*ihsān*; *al-Nahl* 16:90). Justice is a measure for measure concept, whereas *ihsān* can be unilateral and reach far beyond the equations of justice, especially in relationships between the human and non-human inhabitants of the earth. Thus it is declared that God has ingrained beauty and perfection in all things (*Fussilat* 41:7), which is reiterated in a *hadith* that “God has inscribed beauty and perfection (*ihsān*) on all things”.<sup>11</sup> It is mankind's assignment then to strive to discover and manifest it. To facilitate this, man must not only observe the natural balance of all things but also remove obstacles that may hinder their natural growth. This becomes, however, a remote prospect when man himself violates the God-ordained natural balance and actively engages in consumerist extravagance and excess. It is a religio-ethical mission of mankind in the earth, as the contemporary scholar Al-Qaradawi (2001, p. 212) noted, “always to act conscientiously in his capacity as God's vicegerent and custodian”. The following *hadith* juxtaposes trusteeship with moral autonomy:

Beware that every one of you is a custodian and responsible for that which is in his custody. The leader is a custodian and he is responsible for his subjects; a man is a custodian and he is responsible for his family; a woman is the custodian of her husband's home and children and she is responsible for them. Surely each one of you is a custodian and responsible for his charge. (Al-Bukhari 1986, vol. 9: hadith #252)

## 12.5 Building the Earth (*ʿImār al-Ard*, *ʿUmrān*)

Vicegerency also confers on humankind the authority to build the earth and develop its resources: “He it is who created you from the earth and made it your assignment to build it” (Q. *Hud* 11:61). The scope and potential of this assignment naturally varies in tandem with the state of human progress and civilisational attainment, since humans will be unable to support all that live in the earth: “And We have provided in it (earth) sustenance for you, and for those who you do not support” (Q. *al-Hijr* 15:19). Prophet Muhammad's (*peace be upon him*) appreciation of the

<sup>10</sup> *Hadith* narrated by Anas b. Mālik, in: al-Albani (1954), *hadith* no. 7, p. 179.

<sup>11</sup> Muslim b. al-Hajjaj al-Nishaburi al-Albani (1987), *hadith* no. 1,249.



earth's natural endowment is espoused in the following *hadith* with a challenge: "The world is green and pleasant and God has put it under your charge to see how you will manage" (Al-Albani 1979, vol. 2; hadith no. 3086). The earth is inherited by those of God's servants, as the Qur'an says, that do good works and fulfil their responsibilities (*al-Anbiya* 21:105).

Building the earth for beneficial uses is an evolving concept depending on the tools and know-how that may be available to particular individuals and communities. *Imār* and *umrān* (civilisation) are from the same Arabic root and our usage of *imār* encapsulates its broader civilisational vision informed by the material, ethical and artistic aspects of development. Some aspects of *imār* that are explicitly mentioned in the Qur'an, *hadith* and texts of Islamic jurisprudence relate to the reclamation of barren land (*ihyā' al-mawāt*), planting of trees and growing of flora and fauna, fruits and vegetables therein.<sup>12</sup> Thus the encouragement in the *hadith*: "One who reclaims barren land is entitled to own it" (Al-Tirmidhi 1980; hadith no. 1379).

Barren land is unowned land mostly away from residential quarters with no signs of anyone having owned or developed it. It is an act of merit to reclaim it for productive purposes, especially for food and livestock raising. Thus the *hadith*: "Anyone who plants a tree or sows a field and a human, bird or animal eats from it, it shall be counted as charity from him".<sup>13</sup> The Prophet (pbuh) elaborated the Qur'anic concept of *imār al-arḍ* in another inspirational *hadith*: "If the day of resurrection comes upon any one of you while he has a seedling in his hand, let him plant it" (Al-Bukhari 1959, hadith no. 479; Hanbal 1994 vol. 3, hadith no. 184). *Ihyā' al-mawāt* is not confined to agriculture, as land may also be reclaimed for building of houses, hospitals, factories, etc. Yet "it is obligatory" and Al-Qaradawi (2001, pp. 72–73) wrote "that industrial installations and factories are further removed from residential quarters so that people are safe from their harmful emissions, smoke, smell and other pollutants – simply because Islam outlaws infliction of harm" (Al-Qaradawi 2001, pp. 72–73).<sup>14</sup> The Qur'an commentator and Maliki jurist al-Qurtubi (d. 1273) drew the conclusion that greening the earth and planting of trees are a collective obligation (*farḍ kifāyah*) of the Muslim community. In the event of total neglect of this duty, the ruling authorities are within their rights to compel people to do it (Al-Qaradawi 2001, p. 60).<sup>15</sup> The Muslim philosopher Al-Raghib al-Isfahani (d. 1124) observed on a similar note that building and greening the earth and development of its resources are one of the three cardinal objectives of Islam.<sup>16</sup> The early traditionist Abu Dawud (d. 899) recorded *hadith* reports to the effect that in some parts of

<sup>12</sup> Cf., Q. 6: 99; 27: 60; 36:33.

<sup>13</sup> Agreed upon *hadith*, recorded by al-Bukhari, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *hadith* no. 1,001.

<sup>14</sup> According to Al-Qaradawi (2001), pp. 72–73, *ihyā' al-mawāt* is regulated by detailed *fiqh* rules; one that may be mentioned is that reclamation should be with the approval of government just as the latter is authorised to repossess the land from one who fails to build on it after 2 or 3 years and assign it to someone else who can develop it.

<sup>15</sup> *Tafsīr al-Qurtubī*, 3, p. 306; also quoted by Al-Qaradawi (2001).

<sup>16</sup> Al-Raghib al-Isfahani, *Al-Dharī'ah ilā makārim al-sharī'ah*, as quoted in Al-Qaradawi (2001), p. 64.

Medinah, the Prophet (pbuh) had strictly prohibited the cutting of trees and hunting of animals (Khayyat 2002, p. 32).<sup>17</sup> These last are also prohibited during war, on the authority of *hadith*, and established precedent of the four first caliphs (*al-khulafā' al-rāshidūn*) – unless it be for a manifest need or benefit.

In addition to their nutritional and medicinal value for humans and animals, plants enrich the soil and protect it from erosion by wind and water; they conserve the water by hindering its run-off, moderate the climate and produce the oxygen we breathe. The Qur'an also mentions the aesthetic values of plants and animals that bring joy and peace of mind.

The significance of *ihyā' al-mawāt* is brought into sharp relief by the phenomena of deforestation and expanding deserts. The rate of deforestation in Tunisia due to this phenomenon is 1800 ha per annum (Khayyat 2002, pp. 216–217). Deforestation is a serious problem worldwide.

## 12.6 Keeping the Balance

The Qur'an is expressive of the state of equilibrium God has ordained in the natural world that reveals intricate interdependence between its parts, as well as relationships of the parts, to the whole: “Verily all things We have created are in due measure and proportion” (*al-Ra'd* 13:8); “We have produced therein (earth) everything in balance” (*al-Hijr* 15:19). “He has raised the heaven high and set up the measure, that you may not transgress the measure. So weigh all things fairly and fall not short of the balance” (*al-Rahman* 55:5–9). God has determined, to borrow Husaini's phrase, the earth's “geographic and hydrologic characteristics. He has determined the precipitation patterns of the globe, and also water movement through soils. The recharge of ground water and its drainage occur according to properties of water, soils, and other factors that God has determined [in due proportions]” (Husaini 2001, p. 90). This basically conveys the purport of the verse: “We send down water from the sky in accordance with a determined measure, and then We cause it to settle in the earth; We are most certainly able also to drain it off” (*al-Mu'minun* 23:18).

All parts of the natural world, with its enormous diversity, have a value to each other and to the total global system over and above their value to mankind. The text repeatedly alludes to biological revival of the lifeless earth through rain which is likened to man's resurrection on the Day of Judgement: God sends forth the wind that raises the cloud and drives it towards a dead land and from it issues rain which enlivens the earth after it had been lifeless, much like the resurrection and return of life after death (Q. *Fatir* 35:9).

When man acts, instead of a trusted custodian and architect of the earth, as its most dangerous destroyer, driven by greed rather than need and becomes an extravagant and insatiable consumer, and when the earth is made into a testing field for

<sup>17</sup>Three such *hadiths* are discussed in Khayyat (2002), p. 32 [in Pashto].

deadly atomic bombs producing widespread radioactive emissions, its *fiṭrah* (innate nature) is subjected to dangerous distortion. The translucent water that God sends to earth is polluted with endemic waste and industrial pollution. Imagine that more than 120 littoral cities of the Mediterranean Sea dispose their refuse water and pollutants directly into the sea (‘Abd al-Jawad 1991, p. 35).

All the produce of the earth is duly proportioned, not just in what is evident but as to their internal composition of nutrients, water, minerals and salts. God blessed the earth and made it safe such that “you shall not see imperfection in the creation of the Most Merciful” (*al-Mulk* 67:13). When the natural purity of the Earth’s produce is however incessantly affected by chemical infusions for commercial reasons and when carbon emissions, traffic and industrial pollution poison the air that inflicts harm on humans and other life forms, its God-ordained balance is disrupted. When the cattle and grass-eating animals are fed with animally sourced protein until it is manifested in such problems as ‘mad cow disease’ and when genetically modified plants overtake the natural variety for commercial gain, the God-ordained balance in them is no longer immune – this is nothing less, in Al-Qaradawi’s view, than transgression and mischief, *ẓulm* and *fasād* (Al-Qaradawi 2001, p. 225).

## 12.7 Beauty and Cleanliness (*Jamāl and Ṭahārah*)

The Qur’an and *Sunnah* are emphatic on cleanliness, in terms of both personal hygiene and the living environment. Thus the Prophet (pbuh) declared that “cleanliness is a part of the faith (of every Muslim)” (Al-Nishaburi 1987; hadith no. 120). He also said that “God does not accept *ṣalah* [ritual prayer] that is not preceded by ablution” (al-Albani 1954; hadith no. 7746). Personal cleanliness, clean clothes and ablution are parts of the daily observances of all practicing Muslims, and there is much attention to details in the Qur’an (cf., *al-Ma’idah* 5:6; *al-Anfal* 8:11; *al-Mudaththir* 74:4) and *Sunnah* on such matters as the requirements of ablution and bathing, regular brushing of one’s teeth, washing of hands before and after meals and observance of hygiene when drawing and drinking water from wells and springs. It is recommended that one makes a special effort in personal hygiene when attending the mosque congregational prayers as well as in the upkeep and cleanliness of the mosque environment (Al-Qaradawi 2001, p. 75f). The *Sunnah* also bans urination and excretion of body waste in standing or running water, near public paths and mosques and throwing refuse and litter on public passages that annoy people (‘Abd al-Jawad, p. 39f). The *fiqh* rules elaborate further on toilet behaviour, water and attire that may or may not be deemed to be clean for purposes of ablution and prayer. However, the teachings of religion reach out further: “Truly God loves those who return to him and those who insist on cleanliness” (*al-Baqarah* 2:222). In a particular reference to the congregation of the Medina mosque of Qubā’, the Qur’an speaks in their praise: “Among them are people who love to purify and God truly loves those who purify themselves” (9:108).

Cleanliness is an integral part of beauty within and outside the rituals of faith. The Qur'an asks the believers to "Beautify as God has beautified you", and it "Is not the recompense for beautifying, but beautification" (*al-Qasas* 28:77 and *al-Rahman* 55:60).<sup>18</sup> The Prophet (pbuh) has also said: "God is beautiful and He loves beauty" (Al-Tirmidhi 1980, hadith no. 2800). Commentators have held that the reference here is to one's body, living quarters and surrounding environment. It is reported in a *hadith* that when the companion Abu Barzah asked the Prophet (pbuh), "O Messenger of God! teach me something that would benefit me (which I can regularly practice)", the Prophet (pbuh) replied: "Remove obstructions (and litter) from the path of Muslims".<sup>19</sup> Samurah b. Jundab reported that "The Prophet ordered us to build mosques in our living quarters and ordered us also to keep them clean".<sup>20</sup> Other *hadith* reports provide details on the prohibition of spitting and release of body fluids in the vicinity of mosques and under the shade of trees occasioned by people for relaxation and shelter.

The Qur'an warns the people to take personal responsibility for their wellbeing and health: "O people! The excesses you commit will harm only yourselves. Enjoy the (lawful) pleasures of this world" (*Yunus* 10:23). The *hadith* conveys a similar message: "He who goes to bed at night with his hands unclean should only blame himself (if he falls ill)" (Al-Albani 1979, vol. 3, hadith no. 4209). Personal and environmental hygiene are thus a shared responsibility of the individual and community, but it is the former that must exercise due diligence in the first place, at least for the part under his control.

Notwithstanding the rigorous and comprehensive calibre of Islamic teachings on cleanliness, it would be hard to claim, without wishing to engage in generalisations, that Muslim cities and population centres have excelled in their observance of environmental cleanliness. This may be changing as of late. There is a certain disconnect, nevertheless, with the teachings of Islam and realities on the ground. If there is a case for civilisational renewal (*tajdīd ḥaḍārī*), the essence of renewal here is not to bring a new attitude and message but to recapture what has gradually been diluted over the course of time.

## 12.8 Violation and Abuse

Abuses of *khalīfah* are manifested in mischief making and corruption, which is when man becomes, instead of builder and caretaker of the earth, an agent of its ruin through greed, extravagance, infliction of harm and arrogant disregard of divine guidance. These are discussed below.

<sup>18</sup> Translation of verses quoted from Lombard (2008), p. 66.

<sup>19</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, *hadith* no. 2,618.

<sup>20</sup> al-Sijistani, *Sunan*, transl. Ahmad Hasan, *hadith* no. 456; also in Hanbal (1994), vol. 5, *hadith* no. 17.

### 12.8.1 Mischief Making and Corruption (*Fasād fī'l-Ard*)

*Khalīfah* and its ensuing trust can be violated in numerous ways, but an instance of violation which the Qur'an highlights is spreading mischief and corruption in the earth. The text identifies human beings as having the greatest potential for good as well as mischief making. Hence the warning: "Spread not corruption in the earth;" and "behold what happened in the end to the *mufsidūn*, who spread corruption and ruin [around themselves]" (*al-A'raf* 7:85). Yet even after many warnings:

Mischief (*fasād*) has emerged on the land and sea as an outcome of what men's hands have wrought; and so God may give them a taste of some of their own deeds in order that they may take heed and retract. (*al-Rum* 30:41)

*Fasād* in the Qur'anic language is connected to the destruction of tilth and fertility (*al-Baqarah* 2:205) of crops and soil through abusive practices and depletion of the soil of its goodness. The various forms of environmental damage such as through soil erosion and marine pollution we are witnessing today are veritable manifestations of the Qur'anic concept of *fasād* (Nasr 2007, p. 147; Al-Samarai 1997, p. 163). Mischief becomes rampant on earth due to human defiance of divine guidance.

Al-Qaradawi identified protection of the natural environment (*ḥifẓ al-bi'ah*) as one of the higher objectives of the Sharī'ah, side by side with protection of life (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*) and protection of property (*ḥifẓ al-māl*). He quoted about 20 Qur'anic verses and numerous *hadith* in support of this conclusion and added that it is a duty of Muslims to utilise and consume the God-ordained bounties of nature with sensitivity and care, consume only proportionately with their actual needs and observe the health and continued productivity of the natural resources (Al-Qaradawi 2010, p. 71f). Muslims can show gratitude for God's bounties by refraining from corruption, wastefulness and pollution of the purity of the earth's environment. Speaking of corruption, Al-Qaradawi wrote that it can be physical, such as destruction of physical assets, polluting clean air and water, or it can be non-physical, such as spreading of oppression (*ẓulm*) and polluting the hearts and minds of people and advocacy of what is harmful and dangerous. Just to mention the subthemes of his discussion, Al-Qaradawi lists care for livestock and protecting them against danger and disease and the *hadith* also which permits use of the hide [also hair and bones] of dead (unslaughtered) animals for beneficial uses. Care for the cleanliness of public thoroughfares and removing obstacles from them is, according to another *hadith*, an act of merit and a form of charity. Muslims are advised to be diligent in the utilisation of agricultural resources (Al-Qaradawi 2010, pp. 71–80).

Al-Qaradawi elaborated that environmental pollution, resource depletion and disturbance of the ecological balance constitute major threats to human life as "we experience today. For as long as this course of *fasād* continues, the danger to human life can only be expected to increase" (Al-Qaradawi 2001, p. 48). In numerous places, the Qur'an warns the wealthy but arrogant individuals and nations of old, the pharaoh and the peoples of 'Ād, Thamūd, Madyān, Gog and Magog that spread tyranny and corruption on earth. They are described as *mufsidūn fī'l-ard*, agents of

mischief, degradation and ruin; truly they abused the trust in clear contrast to those who strove to observe it.

The Prophet (pbuh) forbade setting of fire to an anthill by one who might have been stung by a single ant.<sup>21</sup> He also forbade the killing of bees and captured live-stock, as killing them is a form of mischief. He once ordered a man who had taken away the nestlings of a bird from their nest to return them to their nest. He also forbade the cutting down of trees that provided valuable shelter to humans or animals in the desert.<sup>22</sup> Muslim jurists have consequently held that destroying a living creature that does not pose a threat to one's safety is forbidden, both in peace times and war.

### 12.8.2 Extravagance and Waste (Isrāf, Tabdhīr)

Although the Qur'an and *hadith* use these two Arabic words synonymously, a technical distinction has been drawn between them. *Isrāf* signifies extravagance and wasteful use of what is otherwise permissible. *Tabdhīr* on the other hand is spending on that which is unlawful in the first place. Thus one who exceeds the limits of moderation in what is lawful is a prodigal (*musrif*), such as one who consumes food to excess or uses water wastefully for ablution.<sup>23</sup> However, those who spend money on procuring what is unlawful, such as the purchasing of drugs and gambling tools, even by small quantities, are *mubadhdhirūn* – described in the Qur'an as the “devil's brethren” (*al-Isra'* 17:26). This is because extravagance of one person leads to the deprivation of another, and the excess of one limits the accessibility right to resources of another. The basic guideline on utilisation of resources and spending is moderation that avoids both the extremes of niggardliness and extravagance.<sup>24</sup> The rules of *fiqh* maintain that use of water for drinking takes priority over its usage for ablution. One may eat and drink, preferably with a sense of gratitude to God, but avoid wasting for “God loves not the prodigals – *al-musrifūn*” (Q. *al-Baqarah* 2:172 and *al-A'raf* 7:31). Further instruction on this is found in the *hadith* advising moderation in eating even to the extent that one should finish the food one takes on one's plate. Moderation is also advised in clothing, which should not indulge in extrava-

<sup>21</sup> *Hadith* of sound authority related by al-Bukhari and Muslim on the authority of Abu Hurayrah.

<sup>22</sup> Several *hadiths* recorded in *Sahih al-Bukhari*, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* and *Sunan Abī Dawūd*. See for a discussion of these Bakadar et al. (1997), p. 83f.

<sup>23</sup> Abd Allah b. 'Umar reported that the Prophet, when he passed by Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas who was taking the ablution for prayer but using more water than necessary, said: “What is this waste, O Sa'd! He replied “Can there be waste in washing for the prayer?” The Prophet replied: “Yes, even if you are beside a flowing river” (reported by Hanbal (1994); also quoted in Al-Qaradawi (2001), p. 102. There is a weakness in the chain of narration of this *hadith*, but it is strengthened by another *hadith* recorded by Ibn Majah in *Sunan Ibn Majah* (*hadith* no. 424) to the effect that the Prophet “saw a man doing ablution and told him : do not waste, do not waste”.

<sup>24</sup> Thus the instruction: “Tie not your hand to your neck nor stretch it to its utmost reach that may then leave you self-blaming and regretful” (Q. 17:29).

gance and self-glorification (Al-Albani 1954, hadith no. 4505). The prodigals are, moreover, equated with the agents of corruption (*musrifin* and *mufsidūn*) and the faithful are advised “not to follow the bidding of the *musrifin*, those who cause corruption on earth” (Q. *al-Shuara* 26:150).

Destruction in futility is sinful. ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Umar thus reported that the Prophet (pbuh) cursed one who needlessly destroys the life of a living creature as a pastime. The Prophet (pbuh) said this when he passed by two youths from the Quraysh tribe who had tied a bird, for a shooting target.<sup>25</sup> In another *hadith*, the Prophet (pbuh) warned that anyone who kills a sparrow in vain will be taken to account for it on the Day of Judgement.<sup>26</sup> The Prophet (pbuh) is also reported to have said that one who (wastefully) cuts down a tree invokes upon himself punishment of hell in the hereafter (Al-Albani 1979, vol. 2; hadith no. 2790).

Passive destruction due to neglect, such as letting an animal die of hunger and disease or neglecting a crop until it goes to waste and letting farmland deteriorate due to prolonged neglect, also falls under loss of assets (*iḍā‘at al-māl*) that violates the Sharī‘ah objective (*maqṣid*) of protection of property (*ḥifẓ al-māl*). This is because ownership in Islam partakes in trust (*amānah*), and it is the owner’s responsibility to take care of what he owns and use it for his own benefit or the community at large. Thus the owner is not entitled to destroy his own property for no good purpose.<sup>27</sup>

## 12.9 Elimination of Harm

“Harm must be eliminated – *al-ḍarar‘ yuzāl*”<sup>28</sup> – is the wording of one of the leading maxims of Islamic law, which has in turn been taken from the renowned *hadith* that “harm may neither be inflicted nor reciprocated”. This *hadith* is also a legal maxim by itself.<sup>29</sup> The ruling it contains would subsume abusive exploitation of resources, even by the owner, in a way that manifestly harms the living environment.<sup>30</sup> The harm so inflicted must, however, be manifest and exorbitant, which means that a slight harm is usually tolerated, especially when it emanates from the normal exercise of one’s ownership rights. The owner’s exercise of ownership rights may cause some harm to another person, but unless it is exorbitant (*fāḥish*), no legal action will be taken.

To ensure accuracy in the evaluation of harm and its remedial measures, the law provides additional guidelines for action. There is a subtle difference between mischief making (*fasād fi’l-arḍ*), as discussed above, and the infliction of harm (*ḍarar*)

<sup>25</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, *hadith* no. 5,515, and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, *hadith* no. 1,958.

<sup>26</sup> Al-Nasa’i, *Sunan al-Nasa’ī*, vol. 7, 229.

<sup>27</sup> See for details Al-Qaradawi (2001), p. 146f.

<sup>28</sup> Cf., Zaydan (2004), p. 86.

<sup>29</sup> Cf., Tyser (1967), Art. 19. See for details also Zaydan (2004), p. 83f.

<sup>30</sup> Cf., al-Jawad (1991), p. 33.

as under review here. Mischief making may be unilateral and may or may not involve more than one actor – such as in the case of one who sets fire to an anthill or one who disposes of harmful industrial waste in an adjacent river. Infliction of harm most likely visualises two parties, its instigator and its victim, who is entitled to seek judicial relief. This is not to say that mischief and harm do not overlap, as black and white distinctions are difficult to draw. *Fasād* and *ḍarar* may indeed combine in one and the same case, for instance, in respect of a factory that disposes harmful chemical waste into a river and causes personal injury (*ḍarar*) to a consumer, in which case it would most likely be responsible both for an act of *fasād* against the general public and damages for personal injury. Mischief making would thus appear to be a public rights issue for the most part, often involving individuals and communities, and may entail not only civil damages but also punitive sanctions, whereas infliction of harm often gives rise to a civil claim for compensation. The former can be initiated by the public prosecutor on behalf of the state and community, whereas the latter is initiated by the injured party, and both or either may have recourse to legal action as the case may be.

The present writer has not seen in the existing *fiqh* literature this distinction between *fasād* and *ḍarar*, one being treated as a public rights issue and the other as a civil claim. While no hard and fast divisions are proposed, it seems a reasonable line of distinction that facilitates protection of the general public against mischief, even if no individual claim has arisen, and also to protect individuals in cases where evidence may be less than actionable to prove *fasād* and mischief to society at large.

According to a supplementary legal maxim, “harm shall be removed to the extent possible” (Zaydan 2004, p. 90). Harm is, in other words, eliminated within reasonable bounds provided that the remedial measure does not lead to a bigger harm. Another maxim on the same subject provides that “harm shall not be eliminated by means of a similar harm” (Zaydan 2004, p. 88).<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, “a private injury is tolerated in order to prevent injury to the general public” (Zaydan 2004, p. 92).<sup>32</sup> If one harm could not be avoided without causing another, then the “lesser of the two harms shall be chosen” (Zaydan 2004, p. 96). The state also bears responsibility to take remedial action to protect the public interest.<sup>33</sup> According to yet another legal maxim, “harm cannot establish a precedent – *al-ḍararū lā yakūnū qadīm<sup>am</sup>*”, which means that lapse of time cannot justify continuation of a harm.<sup>34</sup> All of this is further to be guided by the maxim that “averting harm takes priority over attracting benefit” (Zaydan 2004, p. 99).

The Sharī‘ah also empowers government authorities to impose moratoria on activities, projects and enterprises they consider will result in real damage to the environment. Applying the legal maxim that “averting of harm takes precedence over the acquisition of benefit” may mean abandoning some projects, but if the

<sup>31</sup> See also Tyser (1967), Art. 25.

<sup>32</sup> Tyser (1967), Art. 26.

<sup>33</sup> Cf., ‘Abd al-Jawad (1991), p. 147.

<sup>34</sup> See for a discussion of these and other legal maxims, Kamali (2008), Chap. 7 bearing the title “Legal Maxims (Qawa’id al-kulliyah al-fiqhiyyah)”, pp. 141–62, at 148f.



community is in urgent need of a project that may result in some harm, that may be allowed under the principle that “dire necessities render the unlawful lawful” (Zaydan 2004, p. 222).

The Islamic tradition is expressive of a great deal of concern for animal welfare. There are *hadiths* on record where the Prophet (pbuh) warned, in particularly emphatic terms with God’s wrath and punishment, those who are cruel to animals, such as dogs, cats, camels and cattle, under their care.<sup>35</sup> The precedent of the Rightly Guided Caliphs provides inspiring examples of animal care.<sup>36</sup> Government authorities are thus responsible to protect domestic and wild animals in places such as zoos and research institutions against abusive practices. Notwithstanding the distinctively compassionate tenor of our tradition, actual practice is unfortunately uninspiring as the welfare of animals is not a particularly visible feature of Muslim society practices today. This is perhaps an area where our concern for civilisational renewal (*tajdīd ḥaḍārī*) is again relevant in reminding us of the need to reconnect ourselves with the original teachings of Islam.

Furthermore, the Islamic public law principle of Sharī‘ah-oriented policy (*siyāsah shar‘iyyah*) empowers government authorities to impose technical standards, licensing provisions and policy measures that encourage moderation and prevent or minimise environmental damage (Kamali 2008, pp. 225–246).

Clearly, these and similar provisions of Islamic law encapsulate between them most, if not all, instances of environmental abuse. They also empower judicial authorities to take appropriate preventive and remedial action, including financial compensation and punitive sanctions. To sum, the Sharī‘ah guidelines on elimination of harm empower national governments and actors to take action, yet they may be powerless, especially in the case of weaker countries, to take deterrent action against multinational corporations and more powerful countries. It is here where international conventions and binding instruments are necessary to develop consensus and common strategies to curb further damage to the natural environment.

## 12.10 Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

Scientists agree almost unanimously that human activities are the likely cause of a rapid increase in global temperatures over the past several decades, resulting in global warming (Abdul Hamid 2011a). Zakri Abdul Hamid has rightly observed that the “modest and incremental approach” that world leaders have taken so far to the climate issue “is not enough ... only a major overhaul of the governance system will address the challenges of environmental sustainability”. Thus he proposed the formation of a World Environment Organisation (WEO) similar to that of World Trade Organization (WTO) that would set standards and facilitate collective

<sup>35</sup> See, for English translation of a number of hadiths on animal care, Abd al-Hamid (1997), pp. 62–63.

<sup>36</sup> See for details Al-Qaradawi (2001), pp. 122–134.

planning to curb environmental damage. Currently more than 40 UN agencies deal with environmental issues; these should be consolidated under one umbrella of the proposed WEO (Abdul Hamid 2011b).

Solutions to the environmental crisis can hardly be expected to come without addressing the spiritual malaise of modern man and his rediscovery of the vision and wisdom that must inform his responses to the crisis. Today there is a need for a renewed understanding of the environmental challenge as we have all become, in a globalised world, victims and participants, some more widely than others, in the destruction of our earthly habitat. It is essential for those who speak for spirituality and religion to collaborate and take common platforms to save the planet from its crisis. It is also important for those who refuse to acknowledge the reality of the crisis and its ruinous manifestations to put an end to that state of denial. Muslim communities and leaders certainly have their share of responsibility to draw the attention of their peoples to the spiritual significance of nature and harmony with the rest of God's creation. Muslim countries and most other nations are fortunately not in a state of denial over the environmental crisis. It is encouraging to note for instance "the Muslim Seven-Year Action Plan on Climate Change (2010–2017)", created at a landmark event at Windsor Castle in November 2009 titled "Many Heavens, One Earth" and organised by the United Nations and the Alliance of Religions and Conservation to encourage environmental action across the religious divides.

Islam subscribes to an ethics and metaphysics of nature, rooted in the revealed messages and law, which concern the duties and responsibilities of man towards the non-human realms of the created order. All proponents of traditional Islam should carry out a dialogue with followers of other religions on an issue which concerns men and women everywhere. By sharing the wisdom of their tradition with others and learning from them in the meantime, they can contribute together not only to the Islamic world itself but to the betterment of the larger humanity. The destruction of one part of creation affects other parts in ways that the science of today may not have adequately exposed. In an interdependent natural environment in which we all live, it is for men and women everywhere to unite and to borrow Nasr's (1997, p. 35) phrase "not in an agnostic humanism which kills the Divine in man...but in the one Spirit which manifests itself in different ways in the vast and complex ocean of humanity".

Ethical teaching and spiritual wisdom in defence of the natural environment should be backed by legislation and effective enforcement measures for appeals only to conscience without positive inducement may well put those who respond with self-restraint at a disadvantage with respect to those who are bent on transgression. Islam combines ethical teaching with the legal injunction of the *Sharī'ah* concerning care for the earth's environment and living inhabitants. This aspect of the *Sharī'ah* merits greater attention in that it can move the environmental debate from mere show of concern to an actionable plane that is likely to bear a greater restraining influence on potential violators. When a moral norm is developed into a legal principle, it is indicative of moral progress. Developments of this kind have taken

place with respect to twentieth-century human rights discourse where certain moral precepts have actually been elevated into legal principles.

Mass media, civil society institutions, welfare bodies and parents all play important roles, side by side with governments, in alerting the public on instances of environmental abuse and the need to curb them through persuasive measures and education. This is a continuous effort that requires planning and proactive action, indeed a change from within ourselves, before we can expect the fruits of that vision in real life. While calling for civil society action and a fresh cultural awareness, Al-Qaradawi (2001, p. 235) advised that “parents should not throw the burden on to the school nor the authorities but join hands with them....Cultural institutions and the media should also support this effort”.<sup>37</sup> Al-Qaradawi (2001, p. 237) added that in earlier times the *muhtasib* (ombudsman, market inspector) used to play an important role in discharging some of these social obligations, but that role is now played by a variety of other actors and welfare organisations. All should support ecologically sustainable development. Ecologically sustainable development and planning should espouse and nurture suitable restraints and take into consideration inherent proclivities of various localities and climes. Economic development and city planning should always include analysis of environmental impacts and be designed so as to minimise damage.

The Islamic scripture is evidently emphatic on environmental care and cleanliness, but honourable exceptions apart, Muslim ‘*ulamā*’ hardly speaks about it. They are called upon to make their presence felt and renounce the attitude that depicts as if the environment is not a matter of concern to Islam!

The international conference in Amman, where the present writer spoke, presented another opportunity for Jordan’s Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute to liaise with the Muftis and leading ‘*ulamā*’ of selected Muslim countries to take a common platform on environmental awareness and its religious significance for Muslims. It was recommended that this be done through sermons, mosque-organised events, TV programmes and the like. Interesting developments have also been taking place in some parts of Indonesia in recent years.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Al-Qaradawi stressed the Qur’anic verse (13:11) according to which God will not change a people unless they make that decision for themselves.

<sup>38</sup> Note that when the ‘*ulamā*’ of the Central Kalimantan branch of Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) in 2006 issued a fatwā against the open burning of forests and declared unauthorised deforestation as “sinful” and “prohibited” (*ḥarām*), the villagers complied. Activists said that only the religious “elite” could reach out to the villagers. On 19 June 2007, the local MUI head, Abdul Wahid Qusimy, said his “learned body” had stepped up that effort to inform Muslims in Indonesian Borneo about the ruling against burning of forests. It is instructive to note also that Muslim schools in Java started an Islamic green movement in Indonesia: When the founders of the Darul Uloom boarding school, a traditional *pesantren* (*madrasah*), started building the school compound in Sukabumi (West Java) in 1995, it was hot and humid. The founders decided to set aside 1 ha of the 7 ha as *ḥarīm* designated only for the planting of trees. Four years later and after 700 trees were planted, the air around the school is cool and fresh. The 700 is exactly the number of graduates as every student is required to plant one tree before graduation. This was the result of the “one student, one tree” policy initiated by the school, which also required each student to maintain a tree.

At the national level, environmental care, awareness of its pollutants and protective measures should be introduced in public schools at an early stage, to be pursued by suitable educational programmes in industrial centres, farms and factories. At the international level, it is essential to wage a rigorous campaign for international treaties and binding instruments, such as those that safeguard the environment from the menace of nuclear weapons and their proliferation by all states, including Israel and North Korea.<sup>39</sup>

Lastly, self-seeking individuals and institutions should be held responsible to repair the environmental damage they cause. Cramping too many skyscrapers in congested areas has become commonplace in cities such as Kuala Lumpur, leaving onlookers often askance whether any amount of ethical education will constrain greedy developers and their collaborators in municipal offices to care for environmental safety and the wellbeing of the general populace. Private or local interest should not be condoned at the expense of public interest and damage to larger society.

To summarise:

- Unless a problem is recognised for what it is, the question of finding effective solutions to it is not likely to begin. To deny the existence of an environmental crisis is unhelpful, especially for the major contributors to the crisis. This should be put to an end.
- Muslims have much to contribute to the evolving environmental discourse, yet they need to articulate their resources, engage and develop the language of persuasion internationally and set some good examples within their own countries.
- Ideas to address the environmental crises are not actionable by themselves without enabling legislation and policy initiatives as well as international treaties. The *Sharī'ah* doctrine of *ḍarar* and its allied legal maxims merit recognition by government actors and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation to hold the miscreants liable for their violations.
- In their effort to prevent further damage to the natural environment, government authorities may impose, within the ambit of the *Sharī'ah* law doctrine of *siyāsah shariyyah*, moratoria and emission limits on producers and users of fossil fuel, as well as for licensing requirements to ensure environmentally friendly construction planning in urban areas.
- Educational institutions, mass media, civil society and scientific and legal thinkers and institutions should all support environmental protection efforts. Citizen awareness through family influence, schools and universities is essential for waging a comprehensive campaign to prevent waste and promote cleanliness. From the Islamic religious viewpoint, this effort also merits spiritual reward.

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The Darul Uloom success story drew the attention of pesantrens in Bogor, including NGOs to follow suit. On 29 July 2009, nineteen *pesantren* representing 31,900 students converged in Bogor to launch a more ambitious move to protect a local national park through the implementation of the Islamic conservation tradition of *himmah*, a system of resource tenure established by the Prophet himself. See Yamin (2009).

<sup>39</sup> Cf., al-Zuhayli (2006), p. 719.

Religious leaders and imams should make environmental care and care for animals an integral part of their guidance and advice to their communities.

- An authoritative world body, the proposed World Environment Organisation, should be established under the auspices of the United Nations.

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# Chapter 13

## Reducing Wasteful Consumption Towards Sustainability by Waste Avoidance Using Self-Improvement (*Tazkiyah*) and Contentment (*Qana'ah*) Approaches

Daud Abdul-Fattah Batchelor

**Abstract** This study examines the connection between consumer greed and wasteful consumption, as well as its negative impact on the environment and the individual. It also promotes an Islamic approach to mitigate consumption levels by emphasising the spiritual aspect of man's being in accordance with the Islamic world view. Man was created in such a fashion that if he reforms his desires to strive for well-being in the Hereafter, he can be successful. However, if he becomes overly attached to material goods beyond his need and other excessive worldly (*dunyā*) attachments, he will fail. This study reviews Islamic teachings from the Noble Qur'an and Sunnah with reference to greed and waste and provides solutions in training the soul through reflection and changing one's mindset (*tafakkur*) and through self-improvement (*tazkiyah al-nafs*) to achieve true contentment (*qana'ah*) and well-being, with a balanced level (*wasatiyyah*) of material comforts, while satisfying the higher objectives of Islamic law (*maqasid al-Sharī'ah*). The United Nations Agenda 21 for environmental sustainability emphasised that *the major cause of the continued degradation of the global environment is the unsustainable pattern of consumption and production, particularly in industrialised countries* (United Nations 1992). The well-known waste management hierarchy as a tool for waste management (avoidance, minimisation, reuse, recycle, energy recovery, disposal) stresses waste avoidance as the preferred high-level strategy; however, this approach – along with Western science in general – had proffered little guidance on moderating consumer desires at the point of purchase.

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## 13.1 Introduction

Planet earth is suffering from environmental impacts on a massive scale, reducing its ecological sustainability for future generations. These major impacts include global greenhouse warming; biodiversity loss; the spread of invasive pests and diseases; worsening environmental health from air, water, and land pollution; and the depletion of resources. Rising global affluence is a significant cause of environmental degradation (Myers and Kent 2003). A simple formula can be used to relate the scale of environmental impacts (I) as a function of the variables, population (P), technology (T), and affluence or consumption (A), as follows:

$$I = f(P, A, T)$$

On a positive note, population growth rates are slowing, and the efficacy of new 'green' and 'clean' technologies is increasing, consequentially reducing waste generation rates in some countries. However, affluence resulting in material consumption and resource utilisation is increasing rapidly in the developing world where many aspire to acquire a similar level of material goods as the developed world. In the West, there are a few signs that consumption levels may have plateaued. In Western Europe, waste generation rates per capita have stabilised particularly due to exemplary recycling efforts (Saki 2012). Unless proper preventative measures are applied, production of consumer goods creates air pollution, waste water, solid and hazardous wastes, and contaminated land. However, these impacts on the environment are likely to worsen as industry increases production in response to the demands of increasingly large middle class populations in newly affluent countries.

Currently, technologies and strategies exist to address many environmental impacts since developed countries – who first experienced an industrial revolution – devised many effective solutions. However, since the West has especially emphasised the physical world, rather than valuing the spiritual dimension, it has not been able to effectively tackle the third major parameter of the equation – consumption. Governments focus relentlessly on technology to reduce environmental impacts but avoid any action related to rising consumption levels which lie at the 'heart of the problem' (Hamilton et al. 2005, p. 37). This is no doubt related to the fact that the whole Western economy is propped up through consumer capitalism, not just to satisfy 'needs' but to enhance desire and even promote new 'wants' through smart advertising campaigns. In reality, the quality of life in many affluent countries is now reducing, precisely with regard to consumption, as witnessed, for example, by the excessive proportion of their populations suffering from obesity – of which the top 20 countries are all from the West, except for newly affluent countries, such as Mexico and Turkey.

This study examines the connection between consumer greed and wasteful consumption and its impact on the environment and at the personal level while offering an Islamic approach to mitigate consumption levels by emphasising the spiritual



aspect of man's being. Islam, based on the Qur'an, the last divine revelation, can lead in providing solutions to many of the ills of modern society. Wasteful consumption reduces the world's natural resources bank and causes environmental impacts in the whole product life cycle from extraction through processing until its ultimate disposal as waste.

### 13.2 Waste Management Hierarchy, Waste Minimisation, and Waste Avoidance

The waste management hierarchy (see Fig. 13.1) facilitates waste management strategies that promote best practices, which minimise environmental impacts and resources depletion. The higher the activity in the hierarchy, generally the better it is for the environment. Of all waste minimisation strategies, waste avoidance offers the greatest environmental benefits and cost savings to individuals and organisations by preventing waste generation in the first place. Examples of waste avoidance include improving product design to use less material and purchasing products in bulk to reduce packaging. Even better and more effective than these post-purchase strategies is to discourage the consumer from purchasing unneeded goods at the point of sale (see Fig. 13.2), which is the main focus of this paper. Not only would there be no waste, but there would be no unneeded consumption as well. Clearly, the volume and rate by which resources are being channelled through the human

**Fig. 13.1** Waste management hierarchy (From Zero Waste SA [n.d.](#))



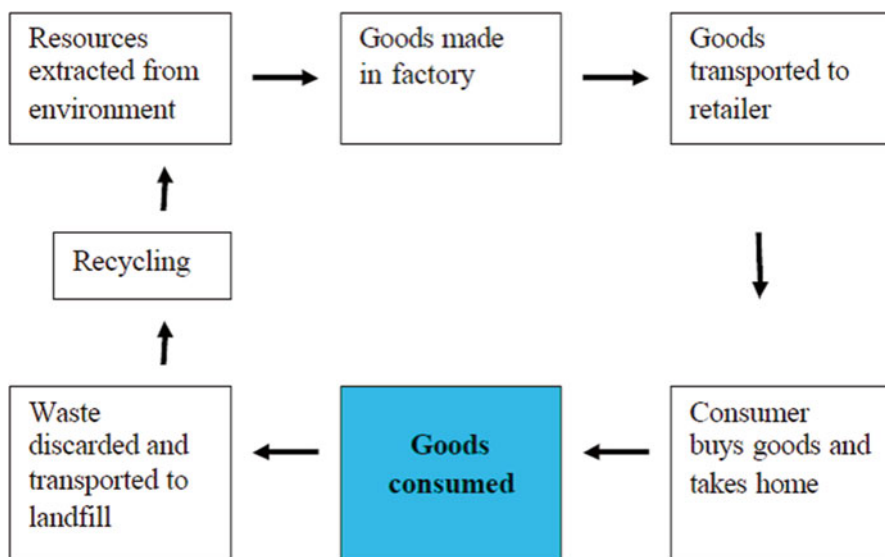


Fig. 13.2 Production-consumption waste path (From Hamilton et al. 2005, Fig. 2)

**Table 13.1** Comparison of current urban solid waste generation per capita and projections for 2025 for the OECD region and non-OECD countries

Region	Current (2012)			Projected for 2025		
	Urban population (million)	Per capita kg/capita/day	Total tons/day	Urban population (million)	Per capita kg/capita/day	Total tons/day
OECD	729	2.2	1,566,000	842	2.1	1,742,000
Rest of world	2,251	0.9	1,966,000	3,443	1.3	4,327,000
Total	2,980	1.2	3,532,000	4,285	1.4	6,070,000

Source: World Bank, What a Waste. Global Review of Solid Waste Management, March 2012 (after Hoornweg and Bhada-Tata 2012, Table 4)

economy need to be slowed (Zero Waste n.d.). However, governments and waste managers in developed – mainly Western countries – have given little attention to strategies of reducing the acquisition of unnecessary material goods or reducing the size of those goods purchased. This is the last frontier for hitherto unrecognised state-of-the-art and out-of-the-box approaches towards waste minimisation. One of the reasons for this is that it requires psychological or religious approaches unfamiliar to most scientists and engineers.

The wealthy OECD countries generate 2.4 times the amount of solid waste per head of urban population compared with the rest of the world (see Table 13.1). Generally, the higher the economic development of populations, the greater the amount of waste they produce. By 2025, as the urban population of non-OECD

countries increases dramatically by over 50 % (and their waste generation rates also increase by 50 %), waste generation for non-OECD countries is expected to more than double as incomes and living standards improve. This level of waste, however, will be a burden on the global environment, and such a trend is unsustainable if the rest of the world adopts the same levels of waste generation as exhibited by wealthy countries. Though wealthy countries have initiated partially successful recycling programmes for waste reduction, this study argues for an additional new approach through a global revolution in lifestyles and consumerism emphasising waste avoidance.

### 13.3 Wasteful Consumption Patterns

Wasteful consumption can be defined as ‘consumer spending on goods and services that are not subsequently consumed. It can apply to goods ... whose usefulness is only partly extracted’ (Hamilton et al. 2005, p. vii). This definition could be extended to include consumption having no benefit or even that resulting in harm (such as tobacco or excessive alcohol consumption). However, such inclusions may be controversial and rejected by certain parties as they depend on individual lifestyle choices.

A case example of a wealthy OECD country is Australia, a highly consumerist society, which after the United States is the world’s highest urban waste generator wasting 3 kg per capita daily. A seminal study conducted in 2004 surveying 1644 respondents nationwide showed that each household wasted an average of AUD 1,226 in that year alone on items purchased but not used. This represented a total countrywide wasteful consumption of AUD 10.5 billion, comprising AUD 5.3 billion on food waste alone, with the next largest items being credit interest and clothing. The survey found firstly that the rich spend more on unused goods and services suggesting also that as nations become wealthier, people increase their wasteful consumption (Hamilton et al. 2005). This is borne out by reports that in 2005, the wealthiest 20 % of the world accounted for 77 % of total private consumption (Shah 2014).

Australians surveyed were divided into the following four groups (percent frequency shown) according to their attitude towards spending on goods they do not need or use: (1) ‘Saints’ (47 %), (2) Guilty wasters (17 %), (3) In-denial wasters (19 %), and (4) ‘Who cares?’ wasters (17 %).<sup>1</sup> It was found that the Saints think carefully about spending and avoid purchases of goods they will not use. Note the religious connotation of this name for those who do the right thing. For Guilty wasters, guilt does not deter them from buying unneeded things. This is ‘characteristic of compulsive behaviours in which people cannot stop themselves from engaging in behaviour they know they will regret’ (Hamilton et al. 2005, p. x). Another group manages their feelings of guilt by denying they are consuming wastefully. Different

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<sup>1</sup>Reported figures in four categories were recalculated to make up 100 % total.

**Table 13.2** Categories of consumers surveyed in Australia (2004)

	Category	Survey %	Characteristics	Proposed anti-waste strategies
1.	'Saints'	47	Think carefully and avoid purchasing goods which become unused	
2.	Guilty wasters	17	Guilt does not deter their unneeded purchases	Point out the contradiction between their attitude and behaviour
3.	In-denial wasters	19	Deny they consume wastefully	Change their belief that they are not responsible
4.	'Who cares?' wasters	17	Generally from households earning >AUD 100,000/year income or from the youth	Change most difficult. Likely only respond to social sanctions from peers or from government-laid penalties

Source: Hamilton et al. (2005)

anti-waste strategies were proposed according to the specific psychological types (see Table 13.2).

The survey showed that 'there is a disjunction between how people feel and think about wasteful consumption and how they actually behave'. Although most say they would feel guilty if they bought things they did not use, and 78 % say they 'always' or 'usually' think carefully before purchasing an item, the data shows that most people continue to buy items that go unused. Clearly, for the majority, their purchasing behaviour does not follow their logical mindset on such matters. Unfortunately, in pursuing public environmental campaigns, governments have been unwilling to link growth in consumer expenditure with environmental degradation. If, however, governments are to achieve their stated waste reduction goals, they need to focus more on 'the nexus between growing waste generation and rising consumption expenditure' and emphasise strategies of waste avoidance as a priority, rather than just recycling, which lies lower on the waste management hierarchy. Government campaigns on wastes are highly effective in raising awareness but are unlikely to have significantly resulted in changing negative consumer behaviours (Hamilton et al. 2005).

### 13.4 Consumer Capitalism and Modern Marketing

Western-inspired 'consumer capitalism' refers to the global industry whereby 'consumption drives the capitalist economy through corporate manipulation of the consumer to purchase material goods. The entire framework is predicated on the idea that the value of a product is determined by the desire of the individual, regardless of the actual need of the product' (Schrader 2015). This will often have an adverse effect on individuals and the society at large. It is anticipated that USD 500 billion

will be spent globally on advertising in 2014 by companies to convince customers that their products will deliver them happiness (McKinsey et al. 2013, p. 7). The common modern marketing/advertising approach, known by the acronym AIDA, involves the following steps: *A* (attention), attract the customer's attention; *I* (interest), raise the customer's interest; *D* (desire), raise the customers' desire for the product or service and convince them it will satisfy their need; and *A* (action), lead customers to make the purchase. There is a legitimate role for certain advertising. Modern advertising, however, can successfully manipulate desires for something altogether unneeded. It also tries to inculcate the message that your identity, your self-value, and place in society are defined by what you possess. One must break free from these insinuations. With such a wide range of mental and psychological profiles in any society, it is the weaker members predisposed and susceptible to 'hard sell' techniques who can suffer severe consequences resulting from frequent and expensive purchases of unneeded goods. These people are termed 'shopaholics'.<sup>2</sup>

### 13.5 Nature of the Human Soul (*Nafs*) and Desires from an Islamic Perspective

Based partly upon Abu-Hamid Al-Ghazali's metaphysical teachings, we understand that each human comprises four key elements – body (*jasad*), intellect (*'aql*), soul (*nafs*), and spirit (*rūḥ*), the last of which was breathed into Adam (on whom be peace) by the Almighty. God created mankind for the purpose of worshipping Him.<sup>3</sup> A perfected Muslim will be one whose soul is under control of the intellect and in line with the urgings of the spirit, which provide then strong God directness or *Taqwā*. It is the challenge of every person to train the commanding soul (*nafs ammārah*) that she/he inherits at birth for her/him to become eventually submissive and at peace (*nafs mutma'innah*) with God's commands. The soul is like a wild stallion<sup>4</sup> that must be trained so that it will carry the rider willingly and successfully by God's mercy (*rahmah*) to *Jannah* – its ultimate heavenly destination – the eternal spiritual paradise.

The soul of a newborn baby is created to be demanding (*nafs ammārah*) from its carer – for food, comfort, and attention – as part of God's plan to ensure its survival. These demands need to be gradually controlled as the child grows so as to avoid worldly (*dunyā*) illnesses. As the Aziz's wife in the Qur'an (*Yusuf* 12:53) reminds us, 'Verily, the human soul (*nafs*) incites to evil'. Having progressed to an adolescent stage, one should then have achieved a state of *nafs lawwāmah* (self-reproaching soul), which continually conducts *muḥāsabah*, identifying faults within oneself

<sup>2</sup>The technical term applied to this behavior is 'oniomania'.

<sup>3</sup>Q. 51:56

<sup>4</sup>'Hasan Basri, may God be pleased with him, said: 'There is no headstrong steed more difficult to rein in than the animal soul'. See Al-Ghazali 2010, p. 22.

(greed, stinginess, envy, etc.) and works at removing them through *tazkiyat un-nafs* (self-improvement):

I swear by the self-accusing soul (*nafs al-lawwāmah*). (Q. *al-Qiyamah* 75:2)

If *muḥāsabah* with *tazkiyah* and *murāqabah* (continual vigilance) are conducted incessantly, then the higher state of the soul can be reached – *nafs mutma'innah* – which is at peace, illuminated with good acts pleasing to God Almighty:

(To the righteous soul will be said) 'O (you) soul, in (complete) rest and satisfaction (*nafsul-mutma'innah*)! Come back to your Lord – well pleased (yourself), and well-pleasing unto Him! Indeed enter you My Heaven!' (Q. *al-Fajr* 89:28–30)

This is the intended objective of a sincere *Muḥsin* person to achieve by adulthood. However, if the soul is not trained to become well behaved by this stage, and 'feeds' itself incessantly, the deficiency will result in the person being afflicted by various spiritual, psychological, and physical disorders and illnesses:

See you such a one as takes for his god his own passion (or impulse). (Q. *al-Furqan* 25:43)

If a person seeks only the earthly life and its attractions, these will be a snare for her/him, and she/he will be a failure in regard to her/his teleological design and purpose. Forgetfulness of the Creator and indulgence in worldly pleasures will cause the Light of the heart directed towards God to be lost as it gradually becomes blackened from distraction and heedlessness (*ghaflah*). The need, therefore, is to use the facilities of this earthly existence to help propel oneself towards one's spiritual destination in Paradise. If the ant manoeuvres too close to the honey in the saucer (metaphor for *dunyā*), it will become stuck and drowned to oblivion. The human who therefore manages to train and control his soul and its impulses – to ensure they are balanced with his needs in this world – will be truly free to choose the best way forward in harmony with her/his being and intended design. This is also the Islamic concept of *wasatīyyah* (moderation), as opposed to indulging in excesses and wastefulness.

### 13.6 Shopaholism and Wasteful Consumerism

To better understand the condition of wasteful consumerism, an extreme form is taken for closer examination of its features and aetiology, which can suggest suitable treatments. The form is known technically as *oniomanism*, colloquially as shopaholism. What is being discussed may also be relevant to some people who have not necessarily reached this severe level of psychological-spiritual disorder. Not only is shopaholism a compulsive behaviour similar to drug or alcohol addiction, but it has a detrimental impact on a person's finances and personal relationships.

Shopaholics often suffered from less care and tenderness as children from their caretakers:

When there is a lack of parent-child attunement and nurturance at an early age, the child grows up feeling empty and bereft. Their identity is vacuous, empty and undependable, lacking the rich foundation that solid, loving parenting provides. Children who experience parental neglect often grow up feeling unimportant and uncared for, resulting in low self-esteem. They seek substitutes for their emptiness and often turn to toys or food to combat their loneliness and feelings of inadequacy. (Banschick 2014)

Extensive research shows that shopaholics therefore tend to be more materialistic. Psychologist Paul Wachtel has pointed out however that ‘The more you believe that happiness comes from material wealth, the more likely you are to be depressed, distressed, and anxious – and the less actual well-being you are likely to experience’ (Banschick 2014). The proposed objective for a healthy state juxtaposed to this ties in very well with what could be considered as an Islamic conception of well-being and contentment: ‘What one truly needs is a feeling of strong self-esteem and well-being, a sense of mastery and control, and sense of true appreciation for the important people in your life and for the simple pleasures in your world’.

Compulsive behaviours provide only temporary relief or euphoria from a variety of negative feelings such as low mood, low self-esteem, loneliness, intense anxiety, and tensions in relationships. However, there is a vicious circle of dependency: ‘At first people go to a store and spend a lot of money there but then suffer from the sense of guilt and go to a store to get rid of this feeling again’ (Gillette 2013). Interventions are then required to treat them. These treatments include group therapy and one-on-one psychological counselling, which can be very costly and often have mixed results. Just as with any other addiction, stopping can be very difficult to achieve.

Shopaholism affects about 6 % of the American public. One study of compulsive buyers found that half reported ‘they never even removed the purchases from their packaging or that they returned purchases or disposed of the items in various ways’ (Banschick 2014). It is certainly noteworthy that shopaholics exhibit two main reported common character weaknesses – being much more envious than others and less generous (Hartney 2014).

Some strategies proposed here that could be considered for avoiding wasteful consumption are:

1. Being moderate in all things (the golden mean of *wasatīyyah*).
2. Not buying what is not needed; shopping with a list of needs or budget and sticking to it!
3. Think first before buying: ‘Can I justify its purchase?’ ‘Is it going to improve my quality of life?’ ‘Can I do without the item?’ ‘Can I afford it?’ ‘Is the item essential, a complimentary need, or (only) a discretionary purchase?’ ‘Am I buying this as an emotional crux or is a commercial driving me to buy?’ ‘Is it better to wait and save to buy a better quality longer-lasting item?’
4. Purchase or place on one’s plate only enough food one can eat comfortably. ‘Eating to Live’ means sufficiency, while ‘Living to Eat’ is gluttony. ‘It needs to become easy for you to identify need versus want and to set limits on buying things that you want’ (Postconsumer 2014).

Further, although cruising the shopping mall at weekends with loved ones can promote social bonding, if one feels it is leading to unnecessary purchases, then she/he may consider avoiding being placed at the point of attraction or purchase and instead consider developing healthy alternative pastimes such as sports, fitness, or enjoying nature. These are all strategies that could be applied by religious believers and nonbelievers alike.

Training oneself to undertake moderate purchasing may not be so easy to accomplish: 'Breaking away from the influence of the consumer machine can be challenging. After all, media and societal messages about consumerism and the importance of 'stuff' are ubiquitous in Western culture. Much like trying to break any habit, you're going to backslide and have moments of weakness. ... It's a learning curve to finding the satisfaction of not relying on 'stuff' for happiness. ... There's fulfillment to be found out there in life once you realise it's not to be found in a packaged box in a store' (Postconsumer 2014). An enlightened philosophy is that to live a blessed life is to live simply; limit oneself to needs but appreciate any nonessential though perhaps attractive items that God may send one's way (e.g. as a gift).<sup>5</sup>

### 13.7 Islamic Teachings on Sustenance, Waste, Greed, Moderation, Self-Restraint, and Contentment

Islam contains effective solutions to many of the ills of modern society. God Almighty has not left us without guidance on how to address mankind's greed and negligence, which is so destructive to our health and that of the global environment. On this topic, the eminent Turkish reformer, Said Nursi, discussed man's life provisions by referring to the Qur'anic verse:

How many are the creatures that carry not their own sustenance? It is God Who feeds (both) them and you: for He hears and knows (all things). (*al-'Ankabut* 29:60)

and elaborated that contentment is based on believing and trusting that God has arranged the sustenance for all His creatures to satisfy their basic needs – so they need not become greedy (Farid Ali 2012, p. 1).

We should first clarify the usage of key Qur'anic words in this discussion – *isrāf* and *tabdhīr* – in which two approaches have been taken: Mohammad Hashim Kamali stated that although the words are virtually synonymous, there is a technical distinction from a Shari'ah perspective: *Isrāf* signifies extravagance and wasteful use of what is otherwise permissible. *Tabdhīr* on the other hand is spending on that which is unlawful in the first place. Thus one who exceeds the limits of moderation in what is lawful to him is a prodigal (*musrif*); such as one who consumes food in excess, or uses water wastefully even if for the purposes of cleanliness and ablution.

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<sup>5</sup>A local church in the United States reportedly organised *Simplicity Workshops* which addressed how to live simply and achieve contentment, with the outcome that some households were able to reduce their consumption (buying less) and their waste generation (Allaway 2002).



However, those who spend money on procuring what is unlawful, such as purchase of drugs and gambling tools, even in small quantities, are *mubadhdhirūn*' (Kamali 2010, p. 118)

Al-Raaghib al-Isfahaani (d. 1124 CE) distinguished them differently: *Isrāf* is any action which an individual performs which exceeds the natural limits and can apply to any excess in behaviour, emotions, or spirit or even cultural or social characteristics. He said its meaning is very comprehensive and provides a heavy responsibility for individuals to aspire to moderation (*wasatīyyah*) in all matters. *Tabdhūr*, however, covers specifically the 'spoiling, corruption, and wasting of financial resources' especially in relation to waste and extravagance in matters of food and clothing. *Isrāf* then was considered by him to be the trunk, while *tabdhūr* is a branch (Islam Quest 2012, pp. 2–3). There are three factors which determine whether or not an action falls within the boundaries of waste: firstly, permissibility in the Sharī'ah (as earlier discussed by Kamali); secondly, the judgement of the intellect (e.g. not foolishly setting fire to one's wealth); and lastly, societal norms. Islam Quest explains the latter as 'in the same way that not spending enough in matters which are obligatory in accordance to one's wealth and position in society is considered miserly, spending too much in relation to one's wealth and position is considered as being wasteful and extravagant. ...The limits of normal expenditure are set by the norms of society that one lives in and can vary from individual to individual'. (Islam Quest 2012, p. 2) This is what God refers to in the following verse towards avoiding the two extremes, even in cases of providing charity:

Those who, when they spend, are not extravagant and not niggardly, but hold a just (balance) between those (extremes). (*al-Furqan* 25:67)

*Isrāf* can cause considerable harm to the individual: firstly, as physical harm to the body, and secondly, it draws the wrath of God, destruction in this world (Q. *al-Anbiya* 21:9), and His punishment in the next world (Q. *Ta Ha* 20:127). It also engenders social harm – the destruction of social wealth and resources, decline in societal morals and ethics, and the creation of class dissensions and disunity (Islam Quest 2012, p. 4; Kamali 2010, p. 118). It may eventually develop to an extreme where individuals consider only themselves selfishly and stop caring about the welfare of others in society.

God expressly prohibits excesses (*isrāf*), such as wasting, in two Qur'anic verses:

(...) But waste not by excess: for God loves not the wasters. (*al-An'am* 6:141)

O Children of Adam! Wear your beautiful apparel at every time and place of prayer: eat and drink: but waste not by excess, for God loves not the wasters (*musrifūn*). (*al-A'raf* 7:31)

The first verse was revealed in relation to food crops, while the second mentions both the wearing of beautiful clothing as well as eating and drinking. In these activities – the harvesting, storage and distribution from food crops,<sup>6</sup> consumption of food

<sup>6</sup>As example, Asia News Network reported that 'China wastes at least 35 million metric tons of grain every year due to poor storage and transportation methods and excessive processing ... The losses can feed 200 million people for a year ... said Chen Yuzhong, an official with the State

and beverages, and the purchase of clothing – one needs to be especially careful in avoiding wasteful excess. Indeed, it is with just these two commodities – food and clothing – that the Australian study on wasteful consumption found the most serious material wastage. Regarding the first verse, Mohammed Farid Ali has elaborated:

[Said] Nursi ... while explaining this verse relates it to moderation (*iqtisād*) - in other words the economical usage of sustenance. He advised that to use one's sustenance with frugality is the *shukr ma'nawī* (the inner appreciation) because of which God Almighty will bestow blessings (*barakah*) on the person. He presented the Prophetic tradition: 'He who is thrifty will not lament regarding the family livelihood'. People go into poverty or scarcity when they are not moderate in their expenditure. In this writing Nursi highlighted ... that when people start wasting and are not thrifty, they activate greed in themselves. And ... greed will lead to non-contentment. **It is a vicious cycle: Wasting leads to greed, greed leads to non-contentment and non-contentment leads to wasting once again.** (Farid Ali 2012, p. 4)

To break this cycle in a person requires serious intervention using appropriate therapies.

Islam as a religion and complete way of life calls for its followers to seek balance and moderation in all affairs. Kamali has elaborated on a number of aspects related to waste and moderation (*wasatiyyah*). One hadith cited advised 'moderation in eating even to the extent that one should finish the food one takes on one's plate'.<sup>7</sup> Moderation is also advised in clothing, which should be devoid of extravagance and self-glorification.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, the Qur'an equates the wasters (*musrifūn*) with the agents of corruption (*mufsidūn*) and warns the faithful 'not to follow the bidding of the *musrifūn*, those who cause **corruption in the earth** and do no good' (*al-Shu'ara*' 26:152)' (Kamali 2010, p. 118). God states that excessive wasteful spending is sinful. Those who purposefully waste in full knowledge of their actions are considered to be one with the *shayāṭīn* (devils) and far from the straight path (*ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm*):

Verily spendthrifts (wasters) are brothers of the Evil Ones; and the Evil One is to his Lord ungrateful. (*al-Isra*' 17: 27)

Islam provides a well-developed and holistic approach to the essential connection between human bodily and spiritual needs, good character, and achieving a blessed state of well-being (*tūbā*) and contentment (*qana'ah*), which are considered essential requisites for a good wholesome life (*ḥayāt ṭayyibah*).<sup>9</sup> A comprehensive review of Islamic textual sources on contentment and greed (*hirs*) is provided by Mohammed Farid Ali (2012). Greed is the opposite of contentment. The leading Sufi master of Khurasan, Al-Qushayri (d. 1072 CE), suggested that *qana'ah* is to be contented with what one has and to abandon the greed for what one does not have

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Administration of Grain, adding that the amount wasted during consumption is [even] more shocking'. The Star (Malaysia), 18 October, 2014.

<sup>7</sup>Another hadith states: Hazrat Nubayshah RA narrated that the Prophet (pbuh) said 'Whoever eats from a plate and thereafter licks it clean, the plate will ask forgiveness on his behalf'. Jamai' Tirmidhi, Book 28, hadith 1811.

<sup>8</sup>Nasir al-Din al-Albani, *Sahih al-Jami' al-Saghir*, hadith no. 4505.

<sup>9</sup>Mentioned in the *The Qur'an* (16:97) referring to 'self-contentment'.

(Farid Ali 2014, p. 433; Hani n.d., p. 235). Al-Jahiz (d. 869 CE) gave a broader definition in this sense when he referred to this term as: ‘satisfaction with things that make livelihood easy; to abandon greed for acquiring material goods; ...and abandoning inclination towards material goods and the compulsion to amass them’ (Farid Ali 2014, p. 433; Dar al-Wasilah 1998, p. 3167).

Farid Ali elaborated that ‘Non-contentment puts individuals and organizations into fear of not acquiring their means. This fear takes the form of sky rocketing demands which are one of the key factors driving the prodigious production of goods in contemporary economies’ (Farid Ali 2014, pp. 435–438). He highlighted that *qana‘ah* is a spiritual ‘state’ in which after hard efforts to maintain frugal habits, seekers are rewarded with this state in their hearts, as evidenced in the statement of the Prophet (*peace be upon him*): ‘He who seeks to achieve a state of sufficiency, God Almighty will render him free of need, and he who strives to be content, God will make him content’ (Al-Mundhiri 2001, p. 42). A closely related concept is *riḍā* meaning ‘willing contentment’ and accepting God’s decree without complaint. Farid Ali (2014, p. 438) cited from Iraqi Sufis that ‘since *ridaa* is one of the ‘states (*al-aḥwāl*, pl. of *ḥāl*)’ which alights in the hearts and is not attained by the efforts made by God’s servants, it may be considered as the end product of *qana‘ah*. He concluded that ‘all these discussions on *qana‘ah* definitely support the reality that it is an umbrella concept, which embraces various related concepts such as *zuhd* (renunciation), *faqr* (voluntary poverty), *infāq* (spending on others), and opposes *isrāf* (extravagance), *tabdhīr* (wasting) and greed’.

The *maqasid al-shar‘ah* (objectives of Islamic law) is a key concept – developed by Abu-Hamid Al-Ghazali (d. 1111) and al-Shatibi (d. 1388) – that classifies human interests according to whether they are essential (*al-ḍarūriyyāt*), complementary (*al-ḥājjiyyāt*), or mere embellishments (*al-taḥsīniyyāt*). Whereas the former two classes represent important needs for life (*al-ḥājjiyyāt* relieves hardship but is not indispensable), *al-taḥsīniyyāt* are dispensable but could lead to a lack of life’s comforts. Given that humans will be held accountable to God on the Day of Judgement for what they spend in this life,<sup>10</sup> the latter is a field of doubtfulness in which one should justify her/his expenditures and to which it would generally be advised to avoid or limit such acquisitions.

It is true that ‘Non-contentment and greed has blindfolded us to make well-thought decisions in regard to what we need, how much we should buy or consume, and what is healthy and what is not’ (Farid Ali 2014, p. 438–439). Greed produces waste since humans are not able to utilise or consume all goods, food, and services their non-contented selves demand. Material of a perishable nature will especially be wasted. On the other hand, a contented person will buy in accordance with his capacity and needs and will not waste valuable resources. Ibn Qudamah al-Maqdisi, the Hanbali scholar (d. 1223), advised that to achieve *qana‘ah*, a person should

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<sup>10</sup> Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said: ‘The son of Adam will not pass away from God until he is asked about five things: how he lived his life, and how he utilized his youth, with what means did he earn his wealth, how did he spend his wealth, and what did he do with his knowledge’ (Good hadith reported by Imam At-Tirmidhi, *Sifatul Qiyama: 1*).

‘initiate an effort to control his consuming habits, limit his desires to necessities, cut indulgence in luxuries, and mentally prepare himself’ (Farid Ali 2014, p. 435).

There is a clear lack of understanding on the dangers of greed in some sectors in the West. In 2013, in his annual speech honouring former British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, the Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, welcomed ‘greed’ as a ‘valuable spur for economic activity’ (Watt 2013). In reality, greed is very harmful to our spiritual state, as well as mentally and physically, as witnessed, for example, by the prevalence of obesity and its associated illnesses in Western and newly affluent countries. Obesity shortens life spans and promotes chronic metabolic health disorders such as arterial damage, high blood pressure, abnormal blood fats, high blood sugar, diabetes type 2, and even cancer (Yap 2014).

Clearly, since greed and non-contentment reflect selfishness, they display a further dimension of engendering decay in social life, since without contentment humans become tightfisted (Farid Ali 2014, pp. 439–440):

Islam has set the legitimate enjoyment of divine blessings as permissible and it has also set waste and extravagance as being impermissible. These limits have been set for the reason that all Muslims, in light of their social positions and wealth, have a responsibility towards the human society in which they live. If people were to be wasteful and extravagant, they would be harming that society and shirking their human responsibilities; in addition, they would develop and cultivate negative personal characteristics which would be destructive to them on an individual level. (Islam Quest 2012, p. 1)

This harms the human spiritual condition, as the Qur’an categorically states:

Behold, you are those invited to spend (of your substance) in the way of God: but among you are some that are niggardly. But any who are niggardly are so at the expense of their own souls. But God is free of all wants, and it is you that are needy. (*Muhammad* 47:38)

In reality, contented people are commonly more generous. Kamali concluded: ‘The basic guideline on utilization of resources and spending is moderation in consumption and spending that avoids both the extremes of niggardliness and extravagance’ (Kamali 2010, p. 118).

*Zuhd* is an important element in one’s appreciation of the reality of this world vis-à-vis the next life (*ākhirah*). Understanding this quality correctly provides additional support to one’s practice of *tazkiyat un-nafs* and achievement of a contented state. One must successfully negotiate one’s life transaction in this world (*dunyā*) to be successful in the next. This transaction is most easily accomplished if one travels light without excessive attachments to material things (Al-Ghazali 2007, p. 36).<sup>11</sup> *Zuhd* can then be considered as meaning ‘self-restraint and self-discipline’ or reducing worldly pleasures and resisting human desires (*shahwah*), except those which satisfy genuine needs, for the sake of eternal happiness in the Hereafter. According to Wahbah al-Zuhayli, it is ‘Abandoning those lawful [means] beyond need’ (Farid Ali 2014, p. 441; al-Zuhayli 2005, p. 436). God severely warned those people who love this world more than the next life:

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<sup>11</sup> Imam Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (2007, p. 36) reported: ‘Jesus (*on whom be peace*) said, ‘The lover of the world is like a man drinking sea-water; the more he drinks, the more thirsty he gets, till at last he perishes with thirst unquenched’.

(...) on these [people] is the wrath of God, and they shall have a grievous chastisement. This is because they love this world's life more than the Hereafter. (*al-Nahl* 16:106–107)

God also stressed the need for balance and that people partake *in moderation* of good things in this world:

Behold his people said to him [i.e. Qarun]: 'Exult not, for God loves not those who exult (in riches). But seek, with the (wealth) which God has bestowed on you, the Home of the Hereafter, nor forget your portion [of lawful enjoyment] in this world'. (*al-Qasas* 28:76–77)

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), who perfectly understood and exemplified the trait of *zuhd*, once said: 'I have got nothing to do with this world. I am in this world like a rider who halts in the shade of a tree for a short time and after taking some rest, resumes his journey leaving the tree behind'.<sup>12</sup> He was also the most generous of people as he lived frugally without fear of not receiving God's sustenance and gave away to the needy whatever came into his hands. Consequently, the Prophet's wife, Sayyidatina 'Aisha (*may God be pleased with her*), reported that the family of Muhammad (pbuh) had not eaten wheat bread to their satisfaction for three consecutive days since his arrival at Medina till he died.<sup>13</sup> The immense value and reward for *zuhd* spurs on the ascetic as Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali wrote: 'When in the crucible of abstinence he is purged from carnal passions he attains to the highest, and in place of being a slave to lust and anger becomes endued with angelic qualities' (Al-Ghazali 2007, p. 1).

### 13.8 Interventions Towards Achieving Contentment (*Tafakkur* and *Tazkiyah*)

An effective intervention is required to break the vicious cycle of non-contentment-greed-waste. Especially severe is the case of an extreme waster – an addictive shopaholic. Farid Ali (2014, pp. 438–439) has discussed the contribution of self-discipline in another activity – minimising of environmental impacts. How do consumers and producers develop the quality of contentment? Self-discipline goes hand in hand in developing contentment by training the producer on the one hand to carry out her/his responsibilities in minimising waste and environmental pollution during the production of goods in her/his factory and on the consumer by patiently controlling her/his material consumption and evaluating that the goods are indeed needed and of suitable quality.

The internal dimension of man is not well addressed by Western science; however, it *is* by the religion of Islam. Beliefs and values impact on behaviours and lifestyles, which are reflected in consumption patterns. It is necessary initially to undertake *tafakkur* to gain a true understanding on matters and priorities and then

<sup>12</sup> At-Tirmidhi, no. 2377; also recorded by Ibn Majah, no. 4109, and Imam Ahmad, no. 1/391.

<sup>13</sup> Sahih Bukhari, Vol. 7, Book 65, hadith No. 327.

change one's mindset. *Tafakkur* is a serious effort to truly understand something by reflecting upon it.<sup>14</sup> To have proper *tafakkur*, one needs to first properly understand the critical belief in *Tawhīd* (Oneness of God) in its many dimensions. *Tafakkur* then becomes easier and more effective. Also it may be important to *reframe* how one thinks about a particular topic – such as changing the way we evaluate something based on Islamic values rather than those of a capitalistic or materialistic society<sup>15</sup> (Al-Ghazali 2010, p. 6). God Almighty says:

Verily never will God change the condition of a people until they change it themselves (within their own souls). (*Ibrahim* 14: 11)

God further stresses on the personal level the ultimate importance of purifying one's soul (*nafs*):

He will indeed be successful who purifies [his soul] and he will indeed fail who corrupts it. (*al-Shams* 91:9–10)

*Tafakkur* then drives *tazkiyat al-nafs* (purification of the soul), which is the effort directed upon one's self (*nafs*) for the attainment of moral and religious perfection. The Prophet (pbuh) once came back from one of his campaigns saying: 'You have come from the smaller jihad to the greater jihad'. They said: 'And what is the greater jihad?' He replied: 'The striving (*mujāhadah*) of God's servants against their idle desires'<sup>16</sup> (Al-Qari 1985). One needs to appreciate the magnitude of the battle at hand and undertake the struggle to the utmost by knowing one's adversaries – the commanding soul (*nafs ammārah*) and shaytan – and by planning and strategising. Success is dependent on God to Whom we beseech to grant us wisdom and internal strength in this endeavour.

This change in the individual should ideally be the basis for a whole societal change (*iṣlāḥ*), as discussed by Sumaya Mohamed and Shadiya Baqutayan (2011, p. 29):

When the Muslims, as individuals, purify their innate and outer nature and perfect themselves both physically and spiritually, they turn to change and improve the social structure of their societies. They start changing the moral behavior of their families, and close associates. They then turn to their group, society and community. All these improvements are accomplished by performing *Iṣlāḥ* [reform or striving towards pious action]. It is 'an intellectual and frequently practical, response to the injunction of commanding what is good and prohibiting what is evil' ... It is restoring the health of the community to the path of Islam.

<sup>14</sup> See *The Qur'an* 3:191 for the use of this term.

<sup>15</sup> See Al-Ghazali (2010), p. 6 discussion on 'reframing': 'With *context reframing* we take a bad experience and show it in another way. With *content reframing*, we drastically change how we see, hear, or represent a situation. We learn to change the way we represent a situation so we feel differently about it. Now we are at the level of choice instead of reaction. By learning to reframe we can change our emotions so they empower us. ... If we associate consciously, we learn to change the way we represent things, thereby changing our behavior. We have to aim for congruence between our spiritual heart (mind) and body'.

<sup>16</sup> Al-Qari (1985) stated that Suyuti said: al-Khatib al-Baghdadi related in his 'History' this hadith on the authority of Jabir.

Elements of the individualistic approach that can be considered are: firstly, appreciate the great rewards for success – spiritual well-being (*tūbā*, *‘afiyah*, *maṣlahah*), contentment, and ultimately *Jannah* (Paradise) (Qur’an *al-Fajr* 89:27, *al-Shams* 91:7–9); secondly, submit to all of God’s commands and deliberately oppose the commanding *nafs* until a good pattern of conduct becomes habitual; thirdly, regularly conduct *muḥāsabah* (accounting) of one’s actions, reproach oneself, determine not to repeat follies, and learn from one’s mistakes; and fourthly, observe and even seek the company of those of good character and deeds. From Islamic teachings, the particular actions that can be taken within the ambit of *tazkiyah* include training the lower self with sincere thankfulness (*shukr*) to God for his manifold bounties and blessings, fasting, wakefulness at night with Qur’anic recitation, periods of seclusion (*khalwah*), *dhikrullāh* (remembrance of God), and *du‘ā* (supplication).

Lastly, after one achieves a high level of practice, she/he would need to maintain this state and not become neglectful or overconfident, leading to a dramatic fall from her/his erstwhile high internal self-control. This requires *murāqabah* (watchfulness) to guard the entrances to one’s soul with all her/his defences on alert. Progressively higher (sufi) states of *tazkiyah* start with repentance (*tawbah*) and scrupulousness (*wara*) and end in contentment (*riḍā*) (Abu Nasr al-Sarraj Al-Tusi n.d.). Contentment is the goal, *shukr* and thriftiness are the means, and generosity (*ikrām*) is a sign of a person’s success. Purification of the soul, contentment, generosity, and carefully stewarding the use of nature’s resources, if practiced by the majority in the world, is the path towards a healthy and sustainable earth for future generations.

## 13.9 Conclusion

The interconnected evidence of impacts such as rising sea levels and global temperatures, severe ecosystem impacts, and widespread obesity among populations in newly affluent and developed countries indicates that a major global effort is now overdue to curb one of the main generators of waste, pollution, and the depletion of natural resources – wasteful consumption.

Reflection and change of mindsets (*tafakkur*), self-improvement (*tazkiyah*), and reducing discretionary purchases are essential means to reduce materialistic, selfish behaviours towards achieving contentment. These solutions to reduce wasteful consumption lie at the interface between the basic sciences, social sciences, psychology, and religious training. However, this niche is not well researched or addressed by Western scholars and governments.

Such interventions are at the peak of waste minimisation strategies within the waste management hierarchy, at the highest priority field of waste avoidance. The writer is in full agreement with the authors of the Australian case study who concluded that highlighting the importance of waste avoidance will be more contentious for governments than exhortations to recycle, but such a shift in strategy is unavoidable if targets for reduced waste generation are to be met.

This is also a clarion call for readers to become involved and pass the message that we can really help the planet survive for future generations by bucking capitalist consumerist messages to buy more unnecessary goods – and become passionate and take the lead to promote living more within our means and seeking that blessed contented state. Such an approach is essential to ensure future global environmental sustainability and physically and spiritually healthy humans.

Controlling wasteful consumption is a critical element in a much-needed reform programme of the global capitalist system, which would involve some strictures on modern advertising to encourage it to desist from engendering desires for unneeded goods and services. It is also related to assessing the merits of ‘degrowth’, which is ‘the intentional contraction of overly inflated economies and dispelling the myth that perpetual growth is good for economies or the societies of which they are a part’ (Assadourian 2012). It should not promote economic depression. ‘The degrowth movement seeks to improve individual well-being, strengthen community resilience, and restore the planet’s ecological systems’. Reducing overall consumption through individuals’ considered decisions – such as downsizing homes, eating less, and ‘generally owning less stuff’ – is a primary way to achieve degrowth, in line with one of this study’s general messages, which is to enhance people’s lives through self-control.

### 13.10 Policy Recommendations

The following represent policy recommendations towards the prevention of wasteful consumption and for delivering sustainability and contentment:

- Comprehensive programmes to prevent wasteful consumption should be conducted by governments, civil society, educational and religious institutions, and the mass media to raise awareness and effective actions as a means of reducing global environmental degradation, preserving valuable resources, and improving societal health and individual well-being.
- The merits of Islamic teachings on changing mindsets (*tafakkur*), spiritual self-improvement (*tazkiyah*), moderation (*wasatīyyah*), contentment (*qana‘ah*), and being generous (*ikrām*) should be promoted by governments, civil society, educational and religious institutions, and mass media. These methods could be applied also by other religious believers (e.g. Christians, Jews, Buddhist, Hindus) to reduce wasteful consumerism.
- Government oversight over the advertising/marketing industry should be increased to ensure that policies are developed and codes of practice implemented, to prevent wherever possible the unacceptable enhancement of desires for excessive luxury goods or products, which have demonstrated a negative impact on individuals and society.
- Governments should investigate the merits of implementing ‘degrowth’ policies in their economies and ‘tax ecologically harmful industries, financial transactions, and advertising – especially of unhealthy or unsustainable products’ (Assadourian 2012).



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# Chapter 14

## Integrating Spirituality into Efforts for Improving Value Chains of Farm Products

Ahmad Dimiyati

**Abstract** Technical improvement of value chain management (VCM) creates new added value which could be more properly distributed by social institutions to increase income of disadvantaged actors in the chain. Previous studies confirm the statement from Divine scripture that spirituality enhances the development of attitudes, behaviours and habits necessary for better technical and economic performances. Research has confirmed that integrating spirituality into VCM has improved business performance and enhanced the prosperity of the individuals involved. Spirituality guidelines and empowering practices were studied in a traditional Islamic boarding school in the Bandung district, West Java, Indonesia, that produces and supplies vegetables to supermarkets. The outcome and impact of spirituality exercises were assessed using several attitudinal, behavioural and performance indicators obtained through interviews with the actors. Such performances include the compliance of the actors to various spiritual teachings and the fulfilment of technical requirements which enhanced business performance. In addition, these better attitudes and behaviours also enhanced social maturity and psychological comfort of the individuals. Similar practices were recorded in a tea growing and processing industry in the same district and in another traditional boarding school in Madiun, East Java. Recommendations for improvement, institutionalisation and replication of such practices in a wider scope were formulated.

### 14.1 Introduction

Value chain management (VCM), alternately referred to as supply chain management (SCM), is a systems approach to analysing and designing the flow of materials, funds, information and services in the production and distribution of a product. VCM is very important in determining the competitiveness of a product in a market and subsequently in determining the competitiveness of a business dealing with the product (DFID 2008; Lee et al. 2012; Wheatley et al. 2004). This approach is used

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for improving the performance of various businesses (including agribusinesses) as a tool born by secular science.

Improving VCM through technical methods increases the income of the business actors in the chain. The main basis for such technical improvement is increasing productivity and efficiency as well as the creation of added value through better use of production inputs, cultivation and harvesting procedures, postharvest handling and processing as well as improved packaging, branding and marketing (Wheatley and Peters 2004; Woods 2004).

Improvement in production inputs includes use of better cultivars and more effective, efficient and safer fertilisers, chemicals and equipment. Improvements in cultivation and harvesting procedures include improving land preparation, planting and maintenance of crops, pest and disease management as well as harvesting methods, times and tools. Postharvest handling and processing includes cleaning and washing, grading and sorting, peeling and slicing if necessary as well as packaging and labelling. Legal and technical guides for standardised procedures of these techniques are documented in the Good Agriculture Practices (GAP) and Good Handling Practices (GHP) guides prepared by the government agencies in collaboration with other stakeholders and used by all business actors with the supervision of the relevant government and nongovernment institutions (Direktorat Jenderal Hortikultura 2012).

Two types of social institutions could be operated to facilitate better distribution of the added values created through technical improvement. The first type of social institutions is organisations – along with their values, norms and governance – to strengthen horizontal cohesion among business actors within the same segments of the chain (Woods 2004). The conventional institutions which induce horizontal cohesion in Indonesia include *kelompok tani* (farmers' groups), *gabungan kelompok tani* (federation of farmers' groups), growers' associations and traders' associations. The other type of institutions is collaborative arrangements – also with their values, norms and governance – which strengthen vertical alliances among business actors working at different but related segments of the chain. In this category it includes various partnerships or business collaborations among growers and traders, traders and processors, or among the three types of business actors (Brennan 2004; Woods 2004). Social institutions are important in creating mutual trust among interdependent business partners (Batt 2004; Woods 2004). Vertical alliances could also be in the form of product-based associations such as the Indonesian Chili Agribusiness Association involving growers, traders and supporting business actors. The introduction of social institutions into VCM creates the possibility to change this value-free tool into a more value-laden one.

In this systems approach, VCM is one of the human activity systems (Checkland 1998, 1999) involving the perceptions, aspirations, attitudes and behaviours of the actors. Each of the actors has a unique profile with a unique worldview creating different perceptions, aspirations, attitudes and behaviours in addressing various issues in their business and social interactions. Spirituality is believed to have a significant role in determining the worldview and, therefore, the perceptions, aspirations, attitudes and behaviours of any person. In Islamic theology, spirituality arises from

the firm belief that Allah is present, knowing, watching, controlling every person and providing rewards and punishments accordingly (Al Haddad 2011; Yahya 2012). Therefore, spirituality is a self-controlling tool for every person with or without any external control. Consequently, spirituality will enhance individual and collective compliance of people towards any religious, social and legal norms and ethics. This inherent compliance is necessary in establishing people's consistency in observing business ethics or codes of conduct. Generally, according to various teachings, any person with good spirituality thinks with good intention and good notions; acts with good motivation, direction, fashion and objectives; does justice to oneself and others; and is honest, strongly motivated, assertive and progressive but is also tolerant, forgiving, helpful to others and friendly or caring to the environment (Al Haddad 2011; Yahya 2012).

This study was conducted to demonstrate that the integration of spirituality into all aspects and segments of the value chains will improve business performance and enhance the prosperity of the individuals involved.

## 14.2 Literature Review

The VCM concept is used in many types of businesses requiring the flow of material and services performed by various parties to bring inputs into production processes, resulting in one or more products being delivered to consumers (Woods 2004). From a business perspective, VCM is aimed at creating profits through the creation of added value at any stage of the process. If the whole chain occurs within a company, the profit will be created by different divisions each with specific functions related to the production or distribution process. However, in the agro-based sector in Indonesia, various segments of the chain are run by different actors having specific functions. In this case, the profit gained by any individual actor depends on the added value created by the said actors (Gumbira-Sa'id 2010).

In response to enormous concerns that multinational retail networks may use VCM to manipulate small-scale producers in developing economies, efforts to reverse the situation have been designed and executed (Lee et al. 2012). The people or agencies intending to improve the income of these small holders should ensure that the added value is created in sectors performed by this segment of the population (DFID 2008). Generally, government or nongovernment agencies design a value chain wherein the function of growers is improved by becoming the producers of the intermediate products or the end products for sale to consumers. Another approach is to design growers' access directly to the consumers (Wheatley and Peters 2004). Recently, two wholesale markets and one supermarket in Jakarta opened special blocks for grower's groups or associations to sell their produce.

The SCM concept was introduced to the agribusiness sector in Indonesia in 2002 through a study on banana marketing constraints by the Indonesian Center for Horticultural Research and Development (Dimiyati 2004; Setyadjit et al. 2004) and a similar project on improving supply chains of fresh vegetables (Morgan et al.

2004). Since then, a number of studies and projects to analyse and improve the existing supply chains of various agricultural products were executed by various agencies. Recently, value chain analyses were performed in various districts in four provinces of Indonesia to design the most appropriate packages of intervention for better business performance, particularly in creating and distributing the added value to disadvantaged actors. The studies succeeded in identifying some dynamics in the production and trading practices and suggested a number of technical and institutional interventions (Bogor Agricultural University 2012; University of Muhammadiyah Malang 2012; Wandschneider et al. 2013). None of these reports mentioned explicitly the importance of spirituality in the efforts, although Singgih and Woods (2004), when comparing banana supply chains in Australia and Indonesia, recognised the importance of cultural values, including faith-related values in Indonesia.

According to previous research (Dimiyati 2004), the introduction of the SCM concept in Indonesia coincided with the introduction of another tool to address social problems using the systems approach, namely, the soft systems methodology (SSM), created by a team led by Peter Checkland (1998, 1999) of the University of Lancaster, United Kingdom. Since SCM or VCM involves human actors in various positions and functions, it is considered as a human activity system according to SSM. This human activity system is *ill structured* because it involves perceptions, aspirations, attitudes and behaviours of people whose interactions are not easily structured to mathematical or econometric functions but can only be described qualitatively.

Behaviours of the actors in VCM depend on their respective functions, sociohistorical backgrounds and environmental impulses. For the agro-based value chain actors, among the important sociohistorical backgrounds include family and educational history, agribusiness knowledge and skills, land ownership and managerial capacity. Among the important external impulses for these actors include weather dynamics, pest and disease infestation, price fluctuation of the production inputs or outputs, competition from other actors and changes in consumer preferences (Batt 2004; Gumbira-Sa'id 2010).

Failures in establishing and operating agro-based value chains for the domestic market and exports in Indonesia were frequently cited, primarily due to social and technical problems (Directorate General of Horticulture 2012; Gumbira-Sa'id 2010). Improvement of social institutions was offered when seemingly possible technical solutions failed to improve problematic situations, such as the failure to operate regional product distribution centres (Gumbira-Sa'id 2010). However, little was mentioned about spirituality-related issues among these social institutions despite many cases of nonperforming loans, contractual non-compliance and other types of delinquencies. Similarly, two publications of the World Bank on trade competitiveness (Nallari and Griffith. 2013; Reis and Farole 2012) did not mention spirituality as an important social capital for determining a country's trade competitiveness.

Since 2006, the researcher perceived the importance of spirituality in business performance at the micro level and the performances of government services at the

meso and macro levels. Therefore, the group account “*Industri Hayati Berbasis Ilmu dan Spiritualitas*” (which literally means “Science-and-Spirituality-Based Bio-industry”) was created on Facebook, which socialised the idea in seminars and workshops. The author also contributed to the composition of a technical guide for a spirituality-based field school programme of the Institute for Agriculture, Natural Resources Management, Rural Development and Environment of Nahdlatul Ulama (Lembaga Pengembangan Pertanian Nahdlatul Ulama 2010). The concept is part of a greater idea of reintegrating science into Islam, which may contribute to fulfilling the need for real efforts in integrating science and Islam in the fields of biology, as suggested by Osman Bakar (2008).

Spiritualists consider consciousness as not being unique to human beings, but spirituality differentiates human consciousness from that of others, and from the Islamic view, spirituality is the most important determining factor of good human attitude and behaviour (Al Haddad 2011; Al Jauziyah 2011; Yahya 2012). Good spirituality is characterised by a number of positive human attitudes and behaviours, such as positive thinking with good intention and good notion; taking action with good motivation, direction, manners and objectives; fair to oneself and others; and honest, strongly motivated, assertive and progressive traits but also tolerant, forgiving, helpful and easily sharing with others. The development of personal ethics is the most essential target of spirituality learning (Al Haddad 2011; Yahya 2012).

Human ethics play a significant function for mankind in performing their role as Allah’s vicegerents in the world (Qur’an *al-Baqarah* 2:30, *al-A’raf* 7:56). In order to perform this role properly, human beings have to utilise all intellectual and spiritual capacities to understand and manage natural resources including water, astronomical matters, energy and events and terrestrial and marine genetic diversity so that all human beings may enjoy these benefits and be grateful to the Almighty (Q. *an-Nahl* 16:10–14). All these capacities should be used in an integrated fashion since “Allah has not put two hearts in any man’s body” (Q. *al-Ahzab* 33:4), which may separate the intellectual efforts from the spiritual ones. The Almighty will guide those who strive for His pleasure sincerely and wholeheartedly to the right path (Q. *al-Ankabut* 29:69). Being dependent on His guidance, the believers and the seekers of trust should trust Allah in every state that He has provided us (Q. *Ibrahim* 14:11–12), for Allah gives to whom He wills beyond measure (Q. *al-Baqarah* 2:212; *Al ’Imran* 3:27, 37; *al-Nur* 24:38).

Farming businesses, which include land and water management, crop cultivation and maintenance and animal husbandry, are among the most commended living styles. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said: “There is no Muslim who plants something, but whatever is eaten of it is charity for him, and whatever is stolen from it is charity for him, and whatever the wild animals eat from it is charity for him, and whatever the birds eat from it is charity for him; no one takes anything from it, but it will be charity for him” (Hadith Pro n.d.).<sup>1</sup>

Since the success of VCM heavily depends on worldview-related attitudes and behaviours of the actors (Singih and Woods 2004), it is a scientific tool adjustable

<sup>1</sup>Hadith Pro: Sahih Muslim No. 3968.

through spirituality exercises. According to Checkland (1998, 1999), in any social endeavour, worldview-related perceptions, aspirations, attitudes and behaviours should be well addressed in designing technically and culturally feasible changes to rectify problematic situations. The author explores in the study whether spirituality enhances the development of perceptions, aspirations, attitudes, behaviours and habits needed to create better technical and economic performances in business. Performances considered include the compliance of the actors to various technical and administrative requirements which will increase the income of the business.

Frequent cases of misconduct, such as non-compliance to a legal contract, have been cited and indirectly verified by the existing data as common on nonperforming loans and credit realisation in the agricultural sector. Various agro-based businesses require legal contracts and thus also necessitate full compliance of the contracting parties. Among a few examples of such contracts are contracts on seed production between seed enterprises and the seed growers' association, contracts between growers and food processing companies and contracts between growers and product exporters. Thus, positive attitudes and behaviours required for good entrepreneurship include loyalty, honesty and accountability but also the commitment to make other parties successful (Gumbira-Sa'id 2010). In addition, these better attitudes, behaviours and habits will also enhance the psychological comfort of all those involved including business actors (Al Haddad 2011; Yahya 2012).

### 14.3 Study Procedures

Spirituality empowering practices and agriculture-related businesses were investigated in an Islamic traditional boarding school, *Pondok Pesantren Al Ittifaq*, located in the village of *Alam Endah, Rancabali*, subdistrict *Ciwidey*, district of Bandung, West Java.

Major guidelines of the institution were gathered through an interview with the leader. Compliance of the followers and alumni with the principles was investigated through observation, interviews and written surveys. The outcome and impact of spirituality exercises on follower's attitudes and behaviours and their business performance were assessed using some indicators such as loyalty and compliance, positive thinking and forgiveness, gratefulness and helpfulness as well as honesty and sincerity. These indicators were gathered through oral and written interviews with the alumni and farmers involved in the business. The responses of the respondents were expressed in multiple-choice verification and 65 written statements on issues related to business practices and ranked into four levels of conformation of the respondents towards six states of attitude and behaviour and two aspects of business performance. Four conformation levels of 42 alumni and farmers towards five types of positive and one type of negative attitudes and behaviours represented by the written statements were tested using  $\chi^2$  (chi-square) of goodness of fit as described by Steel and Torrie (1980). The null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) was that the distribution of responses followed the expected pattern of 1:3:3:1. Accepting the hypothesis



meant that the respondents' attitudes, behaviours and business performance did not change significantly by following the spiritual guidelines of the leader designed to induce the growth of positive attitudes and behaviours and the decline of negative ones. If the hypothesis is rejected, the pattern will be skewed towards a higher level of conformity for positive attitudes, behaviours and performance or skewed towards a lower level of conformity for negative attitudes, behaviours and performances. The impact of these spiritual exercises was confirmed by testimonies of the business partners gathered through interviews.

Information regarding the use of the spirituality approach was also gathered from another traditional boarding school in Madiun, East Java, and from Arafa Tea, an enterprise producing and trading tea-based products also in the Ciwidey subdistrict. The information was gathered through a telephone interview with KH Maskin, the leader of the boarding school and Mrs Iffah Syarifah, the owner and leader of the tea enterprise.

An extrapolative analogical approach was used to incorporate the lessons of the study as a model for using spirituality in a wider perspective of agribusiness development.

## 14.4 Results and Discussion

*Pondok Pesantren Al Ittifaq* in Ciwidey, Bandung, was led by KH Fuad Affandi (66), an Islamic scholar and a practitioner of *Thariqah Qadiriyyah Naqsyabandiyah*. The institute has practised agribusiness activities since 1973 after the current leader obtained a hard-to-achieve breakthrough endorsement from his father, KH Rifai, the son of the founder of the institution, KH Mansur. The two preceding leaders banned the use of modern methods and products, such as a classed education system and loudspeaker, commerce and collaboration with the government. They were probably part of the scholars' community who took the action of alienation (*ujlah*) from the common world as a form of moral rebellion against the colonial government, but continued after Indonesia gained independence. Young Fuad Affandi had the opportunity to learn a more open culture in other boarding schools that had ended their *ujlah* tactics.

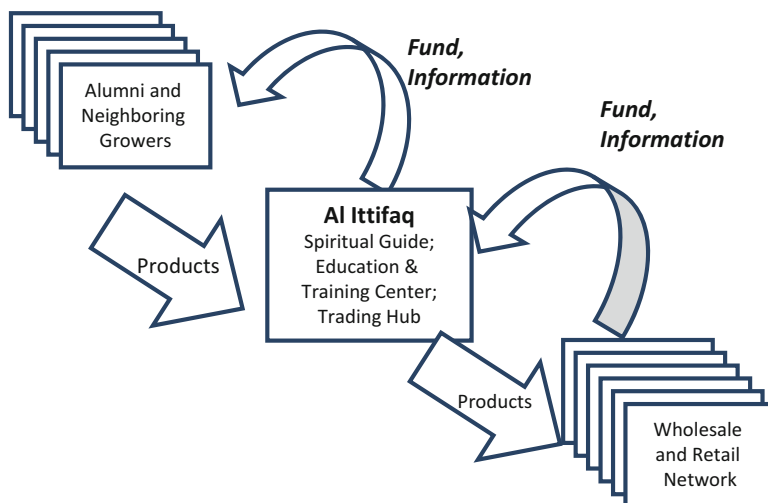
During the early periods, KH Fuad experienced difficulties involving the neighbours because they were so obsessed with the previous doctrines. After a hard struggle, in 1987, he obtained the necessary support in running the business which includes growing, handling and trading fresh vegetables sold to several markets in Bandung and surrounding cities. In 1996 a community-based cooperative was established whose members consisted of the school's alumni, and neighbouring growers routinely attended the weekly congregations of the institution. The Ministry of Agriculture declared the institute as a model for the programme of agribusiness run by community-based independent institutions (*Lembaga Mandiri Mengakar di Masyarakat* or LM3). The ministry also granted the institute the status of primary

class of the Self-Sustaining Centre for Agriculture Education and Training (*Pusat Pendidikan dan Pelatihan Pertanian Swadaya or P4S*).

Spirituality empowering practices in Al Ittifaq include rituals such as performing obligatory and voluntary daily prayers, reciting Al-Qur'an and Al-Qur'an-based invocations and reciting *al-Asmā' al-Ḥusnā*, *Ṣalawāt* and *Rasulullah's* biography scheduled in between working, learning and resting sessions. The two most essential pillars of the doctrine are that, in regard to the relationship with Allah (*ḥablun min Allāh*), all disciples must perform *ṣalāh* at the earliest time in a congregation in a mosque, while for the relationship with other human beings (*ḥablun min al-nās*), they must be hospitable and avoid friction while competing for good deeds. In addition, they must have a good relationship with the government, with other Muslims and even non-Muslim residents. These guidelines are elaborated periodically every Monday night after night prayer. The lessons consist of *fiqh*, *Sīrah Rasūl* and *taṣawwuf*. The leader teaches *taṣawwuf*, the most important subject, whereas *fiqh* and *Sīrah Rasūl* are taught by younger teachers. It is important to note that Kyai Fuad is a humble, egalitarian and diligent person. His popular nickname is "Emang", which in Sundanese literally means uncle, father's younger brother usually used for common people, and when used for an unfamiliar person or subordinated person, it may indicate a lack of appreciation to the owner of the nickname. For a person of his status, the proper dignifying nickname in West Java is Mama, Ajengan or Kyai. This indicates that egalitarian and humble characters are very important in delivering spiritual doctrines effectively.

Verbal interviews revealed that the relationship between Al Ittifaq and the alumni is maintained continuously through business partnerships and weekly congregation. The flow of products, information and funds occurs in a well-structured value chain (Fig. 14.1), as described by Woods (2004) and others. The alumni and frequently visiting growers supply various products to Al Ittifaq to be delivered to the market network through a special contractual arrangement. Among the supermarket chains are 14 units of Superindo, Gria and Yogya in Bandung as well as the distribution centre of Lotte Mart in Jakarta.

All these Al Ittifaq's business activities are run by the cooperative whose 400 members consisted of alumni and neighbouring growers collaborating in growers' groups or federations of growers' groups. Each member grower grew and sold certain types and amounts of products ordered by the cooperative with an agreed delivery time, quality and price. The types of products include leafy, fruit and tuber vegetables and various types of herbs and spices. The alumni and growers were members of a particular group of growers who make the interactions and transactions among the value chain actors easier to accomplish. Organising the actors with the same type of functions in the chain and binding these organisations with contractual arrangements facilitate the coordination among the actors with different functions and help structure the value chain. This structured chain is more easily facilitated with various types of



**Fig. 14.1** The flow chart of the value chains involving *Al Ittifaq*, alumni, neighbouring growers and trading partners

services, including financial services, which otherwise is hard to accomplish (Bank Indonesia 2014; Gumbira-Sa'id 2010; Wheatley et al. 2004).

Written interviews revealed that the disciples comply very well with the doctrines of Al Ittifaq. The alumni and the neighbouring growers consider themselves as permanent disciples of Al Ittifaq. In the words of Fuad Affandi: “Al Ittifaq has become a *ṭarīqah*”, while referring to the fact that the Arabic word *ṭarīqah* (sufi path) has been adopted to the Sundanese word *tarekah*, which means effort. The statement was hyperbolically meant that Al Ittifaq’s guidelines and practices have become the lifestyle of the followers. The effectiveness of the guidelines was expressed through verbal statements during open discussion and through the multiple-choice verification to the written statements put in a set of questionnaires. The following table indicated some expressions of spirituality-related attitudes and behaviours with their corresponding level of conformity by the respondents (Table 14.1).

$H_0$  was rejected for the most positive attitudes and behaviours as well as for the avoidance of negative ones and also rejected for the attainment of good performance and avoidance of bad performance, with high confidence, except for a few statements indicating a higher level of elusiveness. Most likely, the respondents were not sensitive enough towards some subtle messages in a few statements requiring a higher level of sensitivity of the respondents. This may indicate the state of achievement of each actor’s spiritual exercises.

Good performances in producing and delivering the products by Al Ittifaq were verbally confirmed by the officers in several retail markets in Bandung and in the distribution centre of Lotte Mart in Jakarta. All products delivered by Al Ittifaq are

**Table 14.1** Level of conformity of respondents to written statements as indicators of spirituality-related attitudes and behaviours affecting business performance

Spirituality indicators	Range of calculated $\chi^2$ for probability of conformity towards particular spirituality-related characteristics	Range of probability of conformity towards particular spirituality-related characteristics
Loyalty and compliance	12.0769–884.5926	0.005–0.010
Honesty and wholeheartedness	12.8571–728.0538	0.005
Forgivingness, good thinking	7.0000–192.9551	0.005–0.100
Gratefulness, helpfulness	12.8571–573.9048	0.005
Avoidance of bad attitudes, behaviours	3.4615–77.3333	0.005–0.500
Attainment of good performance	5.9231–1171.982	0.005–0.250
Avoidance of bad performance	5.9231–61.3077	0.005–0.250

Note: Degrees of freedom, 3

satisfactory according to the quality standards of the retail networks, except for some normal damage during transportation.

*Pondok Pesantren Sholawat*, in the district of Madiun, East Java, is another educational institution running an agribusiness with a spirituality mode. The leader of the institution, KH Maskin, was an alumnus of an Islamic secondary school (*Madrasah Tsanawiyah*) with longer education in several traditional boarding schools and a follower of *Ṭarīqah Naqshbandiyah*. The institute used to do business in the production and trade of tofu and crackers, wherein the students started each working sessions by chanting *ṣalawāt* (asking God's blessings upon Prophet Muhammad, *peace be upon him*) and praying for God's blessing on the consumers of the products. Currently, the institute has gained a spectacular growth in economic performance to the point that it has left the tofu and cracker business and moved into sugar cane and beef cattle.

The above two cases occurred in the *Nahdlatul Ulama* cultural environment having a different *ṭarīqah* affiliation. Both institutions gained success before being assisted by any government agencies, and the leaders made a spiritually based cultural breakthrough when they took their positions. Also, both initiated the activities with burdensome challenges, but managed to overcome those challenges and succeeded in becoming a model for other similar institutions. *Nahdlatul Ulama*, who plays a significant role in national development, may take these types of social endeavours as a model for improving the economic status and, hence, the social and political position of the organisation. The two cases have demonstrated the creation of a four-strand spiral of positive growth in spirituality combined with social improvement, cultural advancement and economic prosperity. The progress in one aspect has enhanced the progress in the other three aspects, in a synergistic fashion.

Similar practices, though with different philosophical backgrounds, have been initiated in Arafa Tea, an enterprise producing various kinds of tea-based products in the subdistrict of Ciwidey, established in 2007 by Iffah Syarifah after her hands-on training in herbal medication with Tuan Haji Ismail of Perlis, Malaysia. She obtained a master's degree from the Graduate College of Psychology at the University of Indonesia, Jakarta. Currently, Arafa Tea collaborates with three federations of groups of tea growers at three different locations: at Pasirjambu, Ciwidey, Bandung, with 300 members working on green tea powder and oolong tea; at Cikalong, West Bandung, with 300 members working on white tea and white tea powder; and at Sukabumi with 250 members working on white tea. In addition, Arafa Tea also manages PT Rumah Edukasi, promoting tea consumption in Bandung. Spiritual exercises conducted by Arafa Tea workers are such as simply reciting *tasbīḥ* (glorifying God) during all stages of activities, but more importantly they have to avoid any misconduct and should be honest and diligent. In addition, 30 % of the profit is given to the tea pickers.

While Kyai Fuad Affandi and Kyai Maskin are Islamic scholars with little formal education in secular schools and have based their teachings mainly on *taṣawwuf*, Iffah has a strong modern secular education and modern Islamic lifestyle, representing a currently emerging Muslim generation with a modern cultural background, which is more inclined towards *Muhammadiyah's* worldviews and learning styles. It is interesting that the two different worldviews have emerged with similar methods in enhancing business performance. They both used spiritual approaches despite their different viewpoints, different philosophical and theological backgrounds and certainly different details of physical, ritual, psychological and spiritual exercises. It may be worth considering that what appeared to be Imam Abu-Hamid Ghazali's learning stages, described among others by Nasution (1988), may be exclusively achieved by certain learning types and styles with strong intuition, not for people accustomed to sense-based and rational learning styles. These people may not be able to attain a higher status of spiritual experience. This could also be an initial indication that spirituality may be attained through different pathways for various learning types, capacities and styles. Therefore, categorisation of learning types, styles and capacities should be determined by referring to studies on spirituality and human resource management. The most current knowledge and techniques in molecular and physiological genetics, as well as psychological and neurological methods, could contribute significantly to this undertaking.

Indonesia is a host for a large number of endeavours to harness spirituality in rectifying the problematic situations induced by modernisation. In the published media, a number of methods with different philosophical and theological backgrounds have been introduced to society. Among the most popular are the methods offered by Abu Sangkan (2008) with *ṣalāt khushū'*, Agus Mustofa (2008) with modern *tasawwuf*, Ary Ginanjar Agustian (2005) with emotional spiritual quotient, Erbe Sentanu (2007) with *quantum ikhlas* and Ibrahim Elfiky (2009) with positive thinking therapy. These recent developments may be attractive to many people because the methods are packaged, branded and promoted with a modern touch in contrast with the traditional ones. The consumers of these methods are most likely different

from those enjoying the service of traditional spirituality teachers, as described and discussed in *Permasalahan Thariqah/Al Fuyudat al Rabbaniyya* (Masyhuri 2006). Some of these new methods – along with their older counterparts – may be considered as systemically deviated from *tawhīd al-ibādah* and *tawhīd al-uswah*, as suggested by Abu Ridha (2002). However, it is probably well justified to say that spirituality is becoming an important social capital but also a good-selling service, in the materialistic modern world.

Spirituality could represent a bonding social capital among practitioners following the same method or path. Trust, interdependence and mutual respect are easily built among such people. However, it may also create a kind of fanaticism which could be counterproductive for the social cohesion of the broader society. These fanatics often appear among newcomers who have an immature comprehension about the spiritual teachings in the group. After some progress, spirituality may even become a bridging form of social capital given that the practitioners became more tolerant, less prejudice, forgiving, grateful and helpful to others, including to those having different faiths and worldviews (Hasbullah 2006; Lin 2002). Among advanced-level practitioners, spirituality may intuitively become a linking social capital (Lin 2002), creating high-quality solidarity among people with different spirituality paths and encouraging them to collaborate for the benefit of humankind. Thus spirituality may take a significant role in the efforts to utilise natural resources for more inclusive, competitive and sustainable agriculture (Dimiyati 2014).

## 14.5 Conclusions

This simple study is an introduction for more thorough studies and efforts in the area of synergising Islamic spirituality with social and technical tools for the benefit of Indonesians, especially those working in agriculture-related businesses. Much has been said about the need for spiritual guidance for rectifying the current problematic situations, as well as for realising the great potentials and opportunities in the sector. A large number of social and technical interventions have been designed and executed through various government and civil society programmes with little consideration on the spiritual aspects of these issues. This simple study has shown that the level of spirituality expressed in a few attitudes and behaviours has contributed significantly to the creation and development of individual and social capital for better business performance of the actors.

Consequently, this study has revealed some facts or phenomena, which may be of significance for future consideration in synergising spirituality with technical and social packages of government interventions or private undertakings. Spirituality could become the soul of the mental revolution declared by the new national leader in Indonesia.

## 14.6 Policy Recommendations

The following policy recommendations arise from the current research:

1. Theoretically and theologically we may expect that such phenomena could be replicated in larger areas and with a wider scope of activities. Hopefully these could also be applied for different types of interactions, not only for people to people interactions in business relationships but also for government to people interactions in policymaking and public service administration. In economic management terms, spirituality is necessary at the micro-, meso- and macro-levels. Since it involves public policy issues, execution of the concept through legal and/or a democratic process is imperative.
2. High levels of loyalty and compliance, honesty and sincerity, positive thinking and forgiveness, gratefulness and helpfulness as well as an eagerness to take responsibility in the improvement of society's prosperity need to be possessed by people working in the government sector, private sector and civil society. These positive attitudes and behaviours could be inculcated through properly designed intensive spiritual teaching in specified and sufficiently controlled environments such as mosques and meditation rooms, also in open-working environments. The material and methods of teaching, or learning, should be specifically designed for various learning capacities. Targets for each type and capacity should be set discriminately. However, it is important that spirituality learning through a specific *ṭarīqah* should be performed voluntarily as a private choice.
3. To accomplish these tasks, a number of agencies need to take charge in organising training, while ensuring the proper results and evaluating the outcomes and impacts in society. Such agencies should organise and utilise interdisciplinary and multifunctional teams to execute the programmes. *Ṭarīqah* associations could provide a special spirituality service for nonmember enthusiasts.
4. Further studies are needed in the areas of determining more accurate and quantifiable indicators of spirituality, their correlation with and pathways to improved business performance, effective methods to build them in relation with the existing variation in types and the various styles and capacities of spirituality. The most advanced knowledge and techniques available in both scientific and religious endeavours should be utilised.

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# Chapter 15

## Neurotechnological Advances in Exploring Melodic Recitation of the Noble Qur'an: Uncovering the Neural Circuitry in the Human Brain

Muzaimi Mustapha, Nur Syairah Ab. Rani, Mohamed Faruque Reza, Wan Nudri Wan Daud, and Muhammad Amiri Ab. Ghani

**Abstract** Stressful modern lifestyles are shifting public trends in favour of searching for holistic and complimentary forms of therapy such as meditative practices and music. Marketing often addresses the public interest in such therapies using recent neuroscientific evidence that provides the brain science basis as being due to functional source localisations for the music-related and meditation therapies. Reported brain signals derive from specific brain areas, such as the prefrontal and anterior cingulate cortex. Numerous data on cerebral representations for rhythmic music therapy reflect its role as an aesthetic stimulus in inducing internalised emotions, or 'musical chills'. Correspondingly, this has provided a supportive neural basis linkage on brain circuitry previously observed in studies of biologically rewarding stimuli. However, such neural associations with the attentive and melodic verses of the Noble Qur'an remain unclear. Postulating from these conceptual and neuroscientific foundations, we seek to uncover the neural representation for the distinctive melodic and rhythmic recitation of the Qur'an using state-of-the-art tools such as the 128-channel electroencephalography and 306-channel magnetoencephalography. The latter is available in Southeast Asia only at the Universiti Sains Malaysia, Kubang Kerian Campus, Kelantan.

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## 15.1 Introduction

The expanding effects of globalisation and holistic health trends are shifting community attitudes towards more natural and complementary therapeutic forms as alternatives or adjuncts to conventional modern medicines in a wide range of stress-related physical and psychological ailments (Barnes et al. 2009, p. 1). Two alternative modalities in which scientific evidence is beginning to shed light on such attitude shifts are seen regarding meditative practices (Bertisch et al. 2009, p. 517) and the innovative use of music (Bradt et al. 2010, p. 3). Given the related psyche foundations in which these complementary therapies operate, namely, attention control and internalised emotions, neuroscientific facts are providing a parallel biological basis from the brain structure and function to correlate with the cognitive aspects of these behavioural responses (Bertisch et al. 2009, p. 517; Bradt et al. 2010, p. 2). Hence, it is easy to comprehend, with the recognised mind-body interventions of evidence-based integrative medicine, any therapeutic approach that addresses biological, psychological, social, and spiritual aspects of health and illness conforms to the grounds afforded by the scientific literature for meditation and music as potential mind-body therapies.

## 15.2 Meditation and Brain Activation

Meditation, of secular forms and forms rooted in religious/belief systems, has been a spiritual and healing practice in various parts of the world for centuries. Though characterised in many ways and broadly in the literature as concentrative and mindfulness based (Ospina et al. 2007), the word is derived from the Latin *meditari* which means ‘to engage in contemplation or reflection’. The diversity of literature reflects the complexity of the nature and characteristics of various meditative practices as well as the coexistence of a variety of perspectives in which they have been adopted (Chambers et al. 2009, p. 560; Dickinson et al. 2008, p. 561). However, from a general perspective, meditation is best described as a discrete and well-defined experience of a state of ‘thoughtless awareness’, or mental silence, in which the worldly activity of the mind is minimised without reducing the level of alertness. In addition to anchoring attention, meditation may produce a state of calmness, relaxation and clarity of mind. Despite inherent difficulties with methodological designs, due to a lack of randomisations and small sample sizes in recent studies of neural processing of meditation, the neurobiological findings point to significant changes in the activation of specific brain areas in response to emotion and attention training acquired from the meditative practices (Kerr et al. 2008, p. 318; Xiong and Doraiswamy 2009, p. 66). Patterns that are commonly linked to meditation and relaxation are reported from studies that utilised neurotechnology, such as neuroimaging and neurophysiological tools that observed activations in the prefrontal cortex and the anterior cingulate cortex with a corroborative increase in brain signal activities, subsuming the electroencephalography (EEG) and magnetoencephalography

(MEG) (Bressler and Kelso 2001, p. 34). Examples of meditation popular in the West and reported in scientific literature, having their origins in cultural, contemplative and philosophical traditions (such as Hinduism and Buddhism), include methods such as Visapassana, Qigong, Asana yoga, Raja yoga, Laya yoga, Tai Chi, Transcendental Meditation and Zen (Anderson et al. 2008, p. 314; Birdee et al. 2009, p. 969). There is less appreciation or knowledge of their use amongst those of differing faiths, such as amongst Muslim communities worldwide, including in Malaysia (Majlis Fatwa Malaysia 2002).

### 15.3 Musical Chills for a Rhythmic Brain

Contrarily, music as a rhythmic medium that is almost free from spiritual or philosophical frictions offers a degree of ‘salvation’ as it is universally interpreted in much wider transcultural contexts. This is achieved through rhythm as a key component of musical language, which creates its melodic and polyphonic elements that have long been intuitively perceived as therapeutic (Cross 2009). Evidently, the growth of a co-literature in music and medicine has mirrored translational innovative techniques of musical rhythm as therapy in medicine, notably for neurological rehabilitation, despite a lack of substantive efficacy of dedicated trials (Malcolm et al. 2009; Särkämö et al. 2008, p. 867). Nevertheless, in this setting, music is thought to retrain brain functions involved in speech, cognition, movement, emotions and sensory perceptions. These interventions include music-based vocalising techniques, melodic intonation, therapeutic singing, receptive music listening and rhythmic auditory stimulation. The wealth of scientific data regarding the cerebral representation of music-related functions has extended the role of music as an aesthetic or sensory stimulus in inducing internalised emotions as a biological reward (Koelsch and Siebel 2005, p. 578; Galaburda et al. 2002). It is also recognised that emotional responses to music tend to be idiosyncratic and heterogeneous and are closely influenced by intricate and multiple sociocultural, historical and cultural factors (Zatorre and Peretz 2001). However, one internalised emotional phenomenon associated with musical rhythm that helps minimise this heterogeneity is what is subjectively termed as ‘musical chills’ or ‘shivers’ that have been documented using behavioural measures in many who had reported experiencing these on hearing certain musical passages (Avanzini 2003, p. 2). These ‘chills’ are considered a very positive internalised emotion and are sometimes even described as ecstatic or euphoric. The neural basis for these music-induced chills appears to involve the brain circuitry similar to that observed in neuroimaging studies of highly rewarding and/or motivationally important stimuli (Koelsch 2005, p. 412), both in human studies (cocaine use in cocaine-dependent subjects and chocolate consumption) and animal studies (for food and sexual stimulation). The brain circuitry includes areas in the dorsal midbrain, ventral striatum (which contains the nucleus accumbens), insula and the orbitofrontal cortex. Intriguingly, recent studies have also implicated the temporal ability of precise rhythmic performance as influential towards

accentuated scores on general intelligence, which raises the neurobiological basis of an artful inkling of the human brain (Ullen et al. 2008, p. 4238 ). However, music is certainly not a substance with pharmacological properties, and neither can one suggest it is crucial for survival, but yet, music induces emotions that seem to recruit the neural circuitry known to be associated with the more innate biological stimuli.

## 15.4 Melodic Recitation of the Noble Qur'an ('Qur'anic Chills') and Brain Correlates

Within the context of an innate stimulus, language is such a stimulus that is uniquely human. Just as musicologists concur that rhythm is crucial to music, linguists agree that rhythm is equally so for language. Furthermore, the rhythmic quality of a sound has been shown to be recognised by the human brain whether or not it belongs to the subject's native culture (Patel 2003, p. 140). It is from the meditation, musical and language rhythmic cohesions that we arrive at the universality of the Qur'an for all mankind, the only scripture which is still preserved in its entirety and in its original language (Khalifa 2003). The rhythmic entity of the Qur'an is intoned with *alhān* (eloquent), *tajwīd* (intonation) and *tarannum* (hymn-like) potentials, recited by a master chanter (or *qari*) in melodic tones brought into being for humans, with the Almighty providing messages to assimilate. 'Qur'anic chills' are a recognised phenomenon, akin to what has been described for music (Khalifa 2003). In fact, this 'Qur'anic chills' effect may well reflect the Islamic framework of the concept of self, namely, *'aql* (intellect), *qalb* (heart), *nafs* (self) and *rūh* (spirit), as the primordial *fiṭrah* (nature) of mankind. From the neuroscientific context, as highlighted for meditative practices that confer attention control and musical rhythm that offer internalised emotion, these analogies provide us with the basis for a unique neuroscientific perspective of the Qur'an, as an established meditative Muslim scripture with its melodic verses experienced by billions of Muslims worldwide. To date, there are a limited number of studies that have examined the neural basis of the melodic intonation of the Qur'an with inadequate extrapolation of brain waves and unclear cerebral representations, other than some findings that have been previously linked to meditation (Abdullah and Omar 2010; Fatihilkamal et al. 2011). Besides, the neural basis of the healing effects of the Qur'an routinely practised in Islamically based mind-body alternative therapy remains scientifically unexplored.

Central to the cerebral substrate of the melodic intonation of the Noble Qur'an are the intimate relations of the cognitive processes of interest to those of the cerebral cortex functions. In relation to this, cortical field potentials recorded in neurophysiological investigations of meditation frequently revealed brain EEG alpha (8–12 Hz) and theta (4–8 Hz) activities that are linked to different degrees of relaxation. Depending on the location and size of the recording and reference electrodes, recorded cortical field potentials integrate closed-loop neural activity over spatial

scales of centimetres in the extracranial EEG. The potentials are then analysed to determine the source and functional significance, if any, of the observed signals. The intracellular components of the same closed-loop currents that give rise to field potentials are responsible for the closely related magnetic fields, recorded extracranially on the MEG. One of the most studied human EEG signals is frontal-midline theta which has been shown to exhibit a correlative role with the processing of sustained attention and emotion in several meditation studies (Aftanas and Golocheikine 2001, p. 59; Kubota et al. 2001, p. 282; Yamamoto et al. 2006, p. 51). The synchronous MEG recordings, to complement this EEG frontal-midline theta for source localisation and analysis, are known as frontal-mental theta, which have demonstrated identical frequencies and waveforms (Sasaki et al. 1996, p. 79; Asada et al. 1999, p. 29). Correspondingly, data from several studies suggests that the frontal lobe/anterior cingulate cortex represent source or sources for the frontal-midline theta localisation to inform its topographical significance within the cerebral cortex (Wang et al. 2005, p. 605). Interestingly, corresponding brain areas have also been previously shown to be involved in the attention control from meditation and the internalised emotion related to music-induced ‘chills’ effect. However, such neural associations with the ‘chills’ and attentive effects of the rhythmic and melodic verses of the Qur’an remain elusive. Our team is currently pursuing this research using the 128-channel electroencephalography and 306-channel magnetoencephalography, the latter being available in the Southeast Asia region only at the Health Campus of Universiti Sains Malaysia.

## 15.5 Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

Building from these earlier discussed conceptual and neuroscientific frameworks, this article summarises a plausible postulation of the neurobiology of the human brain in viewing the universality of ‘Qur’anic chills’ resulting from the melodic and rhythmic recitation of the Noble Qur’an. The use of advanced brain imaging and signal processing may assist in unlocking the cerebral localisations as the neural substrates of the attentive and melodic Qur’an. Delivering these cerebral representations of the Qur’an within the understanding of human language, neurocognition may generate the impetus for further elaborative and translational studies to propagate the uniqueness of what has long been accustomed to 1.6 billion Muslims the world over – the distinctive melodic and rhythmic nature of the Noble Qur’an.

For this purpose, we urge for multinational mainstream Qur’an experts and the Muslim neuroscience community to forge stronger collaboration in this neuroscientific-Islamic pursuit, to proactively raise funding for transdisciplinary research ventures and to promote collective dissemination and a platform of findings to reach wider audiences worldwide regarding how the human brain tunes in to the rhythmic, melodic miracle of the Noble Qur’an.

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# Chapter 16

## A New Quantum Theory in Accordance with Islamic Science

Ab. Nasir Jaafar and Mohamed Ridza Wahiddin

**Abstract** Wave-particle duality is one of the many strange phenomena observed in the quantum world that desperately requires a new theory. Such a theory is proposed herein through a metaphysical approach based on the Qur'an and the principles of Islamic science, supplemented by philosophical rational arguments. Interpreting relevant Qur'anic verses, together with the pairing concept and the one-to-one correspondence principle, manages to facilitate some detailed explanations regarding the wave-particle duality of an electron. Scientific analysis indicates an electron can consist of both a unit electrical charge and a permanent magnet, which all reflects on its wave-particle duality behaviour as per experimental observations. Though physicists are currently only considering the existence of the induced magnetic field, the presence of which is due to the spin of the electron, the new theory postulates that a permanent magnetic field is additionally present. Furthermore, the electrical charge and the permanent magnetism could be considered as potential energy, which is also believed to be possibly the zero point energy that has been observed to exist, but has yet to be properly explained. Based on this new theory, a mathematical equation has been derived to calculate the postulated potential energy of an electron. Islamic science in this case appears to have demonstrated its significance in proposing a new perspective in the exploration of the mysterious quantum world.

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The book editors support publication of this article as part of the record of the DSIST 2014 Conference proceedings. We, however, leave it to qualified readers to evaluate the merits of this theory and its interpretation.

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## 16.1 Introduction

The quantum world consists of the smallest particles ever discovered experimentally – the atom and its subatomic particles – which cannot be seen and are considered by some contemporary Muslim scholars (ISTAC 2010) as a ‘bridge’ connecting our physical world to the spiritual one. The atom is unique and becomes the building block of everything in the universe, both animate and inanimate. In the hierarchy of physical sciences, quantum physics is located at the lowest end, acting as the foundation for the others and thus marking its paramount role in the sciences.

One of the many strange phenomena observed in the quantum world is wave-particle duality, which is the key to the development of quantum mechanics. Photons and electrons, for instance, are observed in double-slit experiments to behave sometimes like a wave and sometimes like a particle, but no acceptable theoretical explanation for this activity has been given (Wooters and Zurek 1979; Dürr and Rempe 2000; Afshar et al. 2007).

Since quantum mechanics deals with the ‘unseen’ realm (Eddington 1929; Capra 1975; Stap 2009; Marin 2009) and due to the complex nature of the problems it poses for researchers, the metaphysical method based on Qur’anic verses and relevant Islamic scientific principles, supported by philosophical rational arguments, is extensively used in this study. Relevant findings derived using the empirical method are also integrated in the analysis.

## 16.2 Islamic Scientific Principles

In Islamic science, the fundamental principles of the Qur’an and the particulars examined in nature are intelligently integrated and analysed. Many verses in the Qur’an contain important information about the creation of the universe and everything in it. Even though various versions of Islamic science are currently being promoted, the idea and concept introduced by Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Osman Bakar are of primary concern here (Bakar 2008; Nasr 1978).

Five important Islamic science principles have been identified by Osman Bakar (ISTAC 2010):

- a) Unity of the cosmic laws
- b) Signs (*āyāt*) and the symbolic significance of nature
- c) One-to-one correspondence
- d) Pairing concept
- e) Causality principle (cause and effect)

From the above principles, the pairing concept and one-to-one correspondence have been applied in this analysis and are briefly explained below.

### 16.2.1 *One-to-One Correspondence*

The Qur'an states:

In time We shall make them fully understand Our **messages in the utmost horizons** and **within themselves**, so that it will become clear unto them that this is indeed the truth. (*Fussilat* 41:53)

The verse mentions about the phenomena discovered in the earth's atmosphere and outer space that are messages or signs from God as the Creator.

### 16.2.2 *Pairing Concept*

There are two verses that specifically mention the pairing concept:

And **all things** We have created in pairs, so that you may reflect (*al-Dhariyat* 51:49)

Limitless in His glory is He who has created **in pairs** in whatever the **earth produces**, and in **men's own selves**, and **other things** which [as yet] they have no knowledge. (*Ya Sin* 36:36)

Verse (51:49) clearly states that all things are created in pairs, whilst verse (36:36) implies that there exist phenomena not known at the time of the Qur'anic revelation; these phenomena could well include such things as atoms and subatomic particles.

## 16.3 *Qur'anic Scientific Analysis*

Al-Qur'an is well known as a divine scripture that contains much scientific knowledge (Juoro 2011; Bucaille 2003; Ilyas 2001). These sacred verses are mostly allegorical (*mutashabihāt*); thus, one intuitively requires a deep insight of relevant scientific knowledge in order to extract their inner meanings. As mentioned in the verse (3:7), only God knows for certain the true meanings of these allegorical verses, but Muslims have an obligation to provide their best efforts of expert opinion or judgement (*ijtihad*) to unveil the scientific knowledge hidden in the Qur'an for the benefit of mankind (Husaini 1999).

Relevant verses as translated by Yusuf Ali (1968) are here analysed and philosophically discussed on certain paramount topics related to the quantum world. These cover the mass and energy created inside the three elementary particles of an atom, namely, electron, proton and neutron, as revealed in the three verses, which are believed to refer to the atom. The verse of light is specially mentioned and highlighted in the discussion because both electron and photon contribute to the phenomena of light.

### 16.3.1 Verses About the Atom

Three verses in the Qur'an are believed to mention the atom, and it is believed to reflect on the existence of certain elementary features within it. These verses can be analysed and interpreted scientifically to extract some relevant information that could contribute to the exploration of the quantum world.

In whatever business thou mayest be, and whatever portion thou mayest be reciting from the Qur'an, and whatever work you may be doing, We are witnesses thereof when you are deeply engrossed therein. Nor is *hidden* from thy Lord the *weight* of an *atom* on the earth or in heaven. And not the least and not the greatest of these things, but (they) are recorded in a clear record. (*Yunus* 10:61)

Say: Call upon other (gods) whom you fancy, besides Allah. They have no *power*, – not the *weight* of an *atom*, in the heavens or on earth. No share have they therein, nor is any of them a helper to Allah. (*Saba'* 34:22)

Verily, Allah does not wrong by as much as an *atom's weight*: If there is any good (done), He will *double* it, and will bestow out of His grace a great reward. (*An-Nisa'* 4:40)

All three verses use the word 'weight' when mentioning the atom. However, weight is closely related to mass, in which the weight of a body is a force given by its mass multiplied by its acceleration (weight = mass × acceleration). Therefore, the verses provide an indication that the mass is the most fundamental property of an atom. When we refer to the well-established Einstein's equation in which the energy  $E = mc^2$  wherein  $m$  is the mass and  $c$  is the speed of light, the equation asserts that the mass of an atom is profoundly related to its energy. According to Baierlein (2007), Einstein's (1907) major conclusion is that the mass is a measure of its energy content. Einstein (1949) asserted, 'The laws of the conservation of momentum and the conservation of energy are merged into a single law. The inertial mass of a closed system is identical with its energy, so that inertial mass is eliminated as an independent concept'.

Also, energy manifested in the form of mass can be considered as the most basic aspect of an atom, as implied in the verses and verified by Einstein's equation. Nonetheless, physicists presently are unable to explain for certain in detail how the mass of a body is related to its energy, meaning what kind of energy creates the mass and how it is created.

There are presently two different views proposed by physicists to explain this important issue of the origin of mass: (a) the Higgs mechanism and (b) chiral symmetry breaking of quantum chromodynamics. But both proposals, especially the Higgs mechanism and its associated conceptual problem, are still being extensively debated by both physicists (Witten 2007; 't Hooft 2005; Wilczek 2000, 2003) and philosophers of science (Friederich et al. 2014; Wüthrich 2010; Lyre 2008, 2010; Smeenk 2006; Brading and Castellani 2003; Kosso 2000). It is the intention of this study to provide an alternative novel idea as an explanation to this fundamental question.

The Qur'anic verse (34:22) mentions the word 'power', which is closely related to energy whereby power is the rate at which energy is expended. Allah is the only God that exists and His Power is manifested in the atoms that are found throughout the universe. The energy and power hidden in the atom are so immense, as proven by their manipulation to produce nuclear energy, which is created from the nucleus, whilst the generation of light energy derives from the electron. Al-Ghazali asserted that power and will should be present in the individual atom (Al Ghazali 2010), probably based on an interpretation of this verse.

In verse (4:40) God again reminds us about the good deeds, which will be rewarded double. But the amount of this reward has been mentioned in various verses in different ways. For example, in verse (6:160) the good deeds are said to be reimbursed ten times. In the verse about the atom, the reward is specifically mentioned to be doubled. This could be a hint about the property of an atom or its constituents that relate to the word 'double'. The word 'double' could also mean pairing. In the study of the phenomena observed in the quantum world, the important key is the wave-particle duality of its subatomic particles. Electrons and photons are observed to behave both as particles and as waves. The author believes that the verse specifically mentions the word 'double' to provide an indication about the existence of two types of energy that relate to this behaviour. In compliance with the pairing concept, the two energies behave as a pair in opposite ways. The two energies, in the form of mass present in the subatomic particles intrinsically built in their tiny bodies, could be the reason for the wave-particle duality behaviour. Physicists clearly assert the existence of an electrical charge and induced magnetic field in an electron. The latter is temporarily induced due to the spin of the particle. Further analysis is required to find out how the electrical charge and magnetic field inside the particle are related.

### 16.3.2 *Light and Its Energy*

The Qur'an asserts the importance of light as part of our life and its immense role in the whole universe, by providing many relevant verses that relate to it. Let us begin with the most fundamental verse that relates to the energy of light, aptly called the 'verse of light':

Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The parable of His Light is as if there were a niche and within it a lamp: the lamp enclosed in glass: the glass as it were a brilliant star: lit from a blessed tree, an olive, neither of the east nor the west, whose oil well-nigh luminous, though fire scarce touched it: Light upon Light! Allah doth guide whom He will to His Light: Allah doth set forth parable for men: and Allah doth know all things. (*An-Nur* 24:35)

Many great past Muslim scholars, including Al Ghazali (1924) and al-Suhrawardi (Marcotte 2012; Walbridge 2000), provided detailed interpretations of the verse from different perspectives, but none employed a deep knowledge of the atomic structure and subatomic particle properties in their exegeses, since these were then

relatively unknown. The verse relates the lamp to a brilliant star. Like the lamp in a house that produces light and illuminates it, the star or sun generates light to illuminate the whole solar system. But the Light of God spiritually has the power to illuminate the whole universe.

But from where did fuel to burn energy in this generation of light come? For the lamp, an oil that originally comes from an olive tree is mentioned. The oil is said to be so full of energy that a fire is produced without hardly touching it. But a clue is given by the position of the tree as being neither in the east nor the west. What does this mean? A possible explanation of the meaning can be found when the source of light is analysed. The phrase is connected to the olive tree, which is the source of fuel for the lamp. Therefore, it also contains some information about the fuel that generates light.

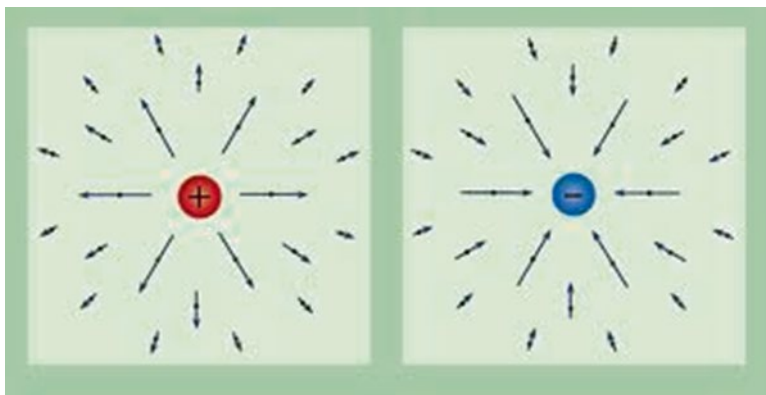
To delve deeper, we have to refer to the quantum world where some similarity in the functions of corresponding subatomic particles can be found. It is a well-known fact in modern physics that electrons in motion can produce light. The spinning of an electron at a high-energy level produces photons in the form of light. The phrase given in the verse may suggest the direction of a certain entity that relates to fuel energy. Since the direction is neither in the east nor the west, it could only be in the north and south direction. This is the direction of the flow of magnetic fields surrounding the earth. Therefore, the fuel or source of energy for both the sun and an electron to produce light is deemed related to the magnetic fields created around them. However, the induced magnetic field cannot be considered as the source of fuel because it is created temporarily only when the electron's electrical charge spins. Therefore, it is here believed, based on the scientific interpretation of verse (24:35), that existence of a permanent magnet is strongly predicted, not only the electrical charge, as presently understood.

Applying the Islamic science pairing concept, the two objects in a pair are created from the same source. For example, the heavens and the earth are made from smoke (21:30, 41:11) and Hawa is created out of Adam (4:1). If the permanent magnet and the electrical charge in an electron are created as a pair, as what could be implied in verse (4:40), then the two energies should originate from the same source.

## 16.4 Electric Unit Charge as a Source of Energy

Based on the previous analysis and findings, a new theory is developed and proposed by applying the Islamic science pairing concept and one-to-one correspondence principle. This theory endeavours to explain the fundamentals of how the three major components of an atom are formed and the energy that has been created in their formation.

The universe and everything in it are believed to have begun with an energy that is related to an electrical unit charge. At that instant not a single subatomic particle, atom or gas has yet been created. The created electrical charge is split into two equal



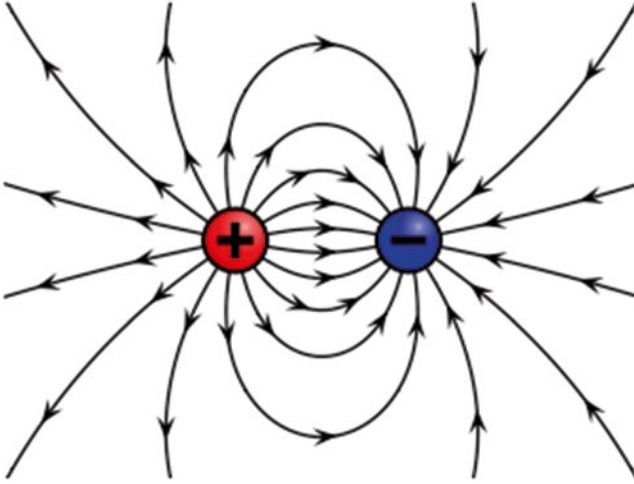
**Fig. 16.1** Electric field lines for positive and negative point charges (Source: Wikipedia.com)

parts to behave oppositely as a pair because God desired everything in the universe to be created in pairs (Q. 51:49, 36:36). Based on this reason and the relevant scientific facts gathered, each of the elementary particles of an atom is postulated to consist of a pair of energies in the form of two electrical point charges, called positive and negative charges, each of the same magnitude, but acting in the opposite direction. As shown in Fig. 16.1, the energy of each point charge radiates fields in straight lines either away from the source for a positive charge or towards the source for a negative charge. From observation, when two equal charges are close together, they repel. But for two unequal charges (i.e. positive and negative), they attract.

When the positive and negative point charges are placed close together and act as a pair, the radiated fields are formed as shown in Fig. 16.2. There is a certain definite distance between them where an equilibrium is achieved. At this distance the interaction of fields as in Fig. 16.2 occurs where the two point charges do not move towards each other. Something is needed to hold the two point charges in an equilibrium position.

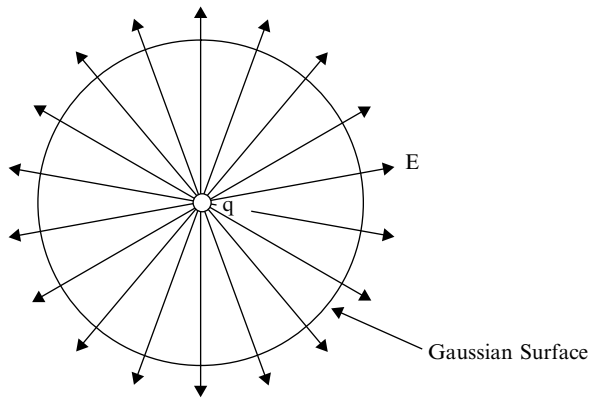
One way to maintain the equilibrium position of the bipolar point charges is to create a hollow sphere of diameter  $d$  and to place the bipolar charges diagonally on two opposite ends of the sphere. To accomplish this, the point charge is visualised to uniformly expand in all directions to form the surface of the sphere. In fact, recent experimental findings indicate that an electron is spherical in shape (Hudson et al. 2011). In this way, the dimensionless point charge is given three-dimensional space, and this marks the beginning of the transformation of energy that relates to a point electric charge into matter that occupies space and has mass. Based on the early Muslim scholars' Ikhwan al-Safa's theory of creation (Nasr 1978), it is here postulated that an energy transformed into three-dimensional space creates mass; therefore, the energy is equivalent to the mass of the body, as asserted by Einstein. We also assert that for subatomic particles, the basic mass is given by the energy of a unit charge created in space in the form of a hollow sphere with bipolar point charges at its top and bottom.





**Fig. 16.2** Bipolar of positive and negative point charges (Source: Wikipedia.com)

**Fig. 16.3** A sphere visualised with a point charge at the centre (Source: Wolfs 2013, Chap. 24, Fig. 24.2)



The centre of the sphere can be considered as the centre of the charge. For the positive charge, the direction of the electrical field at any point on the surface is always perpendicular to the surface, as if it comes from a unit point charge in the centre of the sphere. For the negative charge, the direction of the fields is reversed and the fields are focused towards the centre. The forming of the spherical surface out of a unit charge does not alter the behaviour and properties of the charge. The electrical charge field still radiates uniformly in straight lines in all directions with a constant magnitude. The idea of forming a spherical surface with a point charge inside in a way complies with Gauss's law, as shown in Fig. 16.3.

For an electron, the unit negative charge is spread out in all directions to form a hollow sphere with a pair of positive and negative charges placed on either end across the diameter  $d$  of the sphere. The bipolar fields are thus automatically created surrounding the charged sphere, even if the sphere does not rotate. From Fig. 16.2,

it is shown that from observation the most concentrated and strongest fields are present at the poles where the lines are observed to be close together. As the fields move away from the source, they move on curved lines quite a distance away from each other to cover a wider area, thus reducing in strength and concentration. There is a continuous flow of fields across the surface of the charged sphere running in one direction from positive to negative points. These fields are also believed to be 'magnetic fields' flowing from the positive point, called 'north', towards the negative point, called 'south'.

In our physical world, magnetism is always found in two polarities: north and south. Even if a bar magnet is cut into two, each piece will behave like the original with north and south poles. Despite extensive searches for a magnetic monopole in the universe, it has still been unsuccessful. This indicates the probable non-existence of a magnetic charge. Only electric charges exist, and the magnetic field observed in the universe is actually the pairing action of positive and negative electric charges. The magnetic fields have actually been created out of bipolar charges.

When the same process is repeated, but with a positive point charge forming the sphere, a proton is formed. When repeated with neutral charge (positive and negative charges combined into one), a neutron is formed. Thus, three major components of an atom (electron, proton and neutron) are formed by the manipulation of positive and negative charges. Since only one distance  $d$  is possible, all spheres must be of the same diameter or size. This is the basic structure of an elementary particle in an equilibrium state, each comprising of two bipolar charges at the poles and a one charged sphere, with the exception of a neutron sphere which is made of two opposite charges.

Similar to a point charge, the sphere itself also radiates fields. For a positive sphere like a proton, the fields radiate away from the surface (see Fig. 16.3), whilst negative charges like an electron gravitate towards the centre of the sphere. Hence, an electron is comparable to the earth in creating an attractive force towards the centre of the sphere. An electron acts as a receptor, whereas a proton is like a transmitter. The energy from the nucleus of an atom could be transmitted by the proton to the electron that is continuously orbiting the nucleus, similar to the sun transmitting energy to the earth.

For the neutron, the fields of the two opposite charges cancel out each other; therefore, no fields are generated on the surface. But the energy still exists; otherwise, the sphere cannot be formed. The surface of the neutron contains more charges than the surface of the other two elements because it is comprised of two unit charges, thus doubling the value of the electron or proton. Due to the uniformity of the diameter, the energy contained in the surface of the neutron is therefore more compact as compared with the other two elements.

In this manner, only electrical unit charges present in the system. There is no other energy or forces involved in the three different systems, only two equal charges (positive and negative) with opposite directions of fields arranged in various possible combinations to act and behave differently. Structurally, the subatomic particle consists basically of two major components: a hollow sphere of electrical charge and a bipolar of point charges that produces magnetic fields, both integrated as one

system and acting as a pair in accordance with the Islamic science pairing concept. Since the magnetic fields are also created out of bipolar charges, every part of the subatomic particle is thus made of point charges,  $q$ . Ignoring the negative sign that represents the direction of the fields, the magnitude of the charges in each particle as a basic system in a state of equilibrium is as follows:

Basic charge in a system = point charge of sphere + bipolar charges:

- Charge of electron  $q_e = q + 2q = 3q$
- Charge of proton  $q_p = q + 2q = 3q$
- Charge of neutron  $q_n = 2q + 2q = 4q$

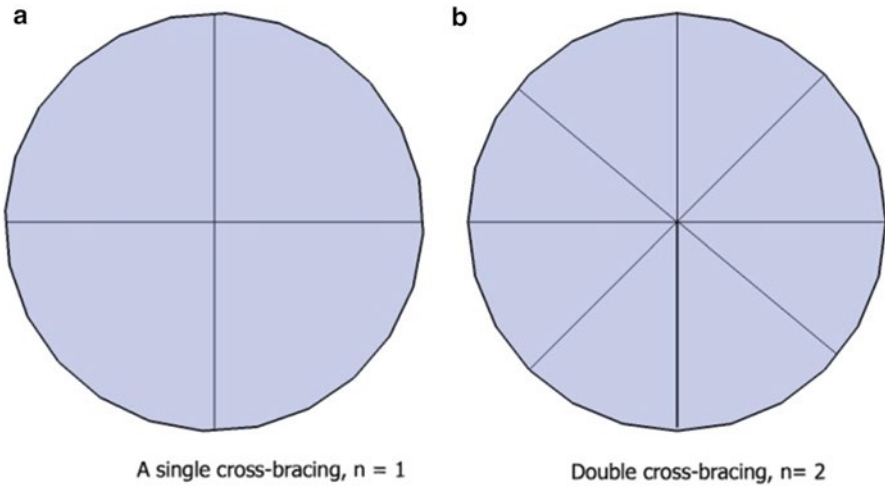
The electron is created with the intention to be in constant motion orbiting the nucleus inside an atom, so it has to be the lightest mass possible to perform the task efficiently. Therefore, an electron is equipped with the basic system equivalent to an electrical charge of  $3q$ . But protons and neutrons are involved in the energy production at the centre of the atom with restricted movement within the nucleus. To achieve this, they should have other additional combinations of positive and negative charges to become a high-mass body with adequate energy built in. In this manner, the mass of a body represents the energy that it possesses, as asserted by Einstein. This theory postulates further by asserting that the mass of energy in matter actually consists of electrical charges.

When external energy is applied to an electron, the energy has to penetrate the magnetic fields surrounding the sphere of the electron. If able to pass through, the energy will be absorbed by the surface of the charged sphere and directed towards the centre of the sphere. The energy is thus stored inside the hollow sphere. In a free space, the applied energy could easily cause the sphere to spin in a direction perpendicular to the direction of the magnetic fields by following the right-hand rule. The relative motion between the moving charged sphere and the magnetic fields enclosing it creates the electromagnetic force within the system in a direction perpendicular to both magnetic fields and spin direction. This electromotive force causes the electron to gain speed and move faster in the orbit. Subsequently, the electron has to move to the outside orbit, which is analogous to the 'fast lane' of a highway system.

## 16.5 Additional Electric Charges for Proton and Neutron

The extra energy can be added intrinsically to the system by installing the required electrical charges inside the hollow sphere. In order to maintain the positive charge of a system, a combination of additional charges has to be provided in pairs of positive and negative charges to make it constantly neutral. If  $n$  is the total number of additional pairs put into the system, the total additional charge will be  $2nq$ . The arrangement is as illustrated in Fig. 16.4.

In order to maintain the balance of a system, any additional mass of charges has to be placed inside the hollow sphere. To achieve this, a cross-bracing running diagonally through the centre of the sphere must be constructed (Fig. 16.4a). For additional strength, another cross is added to give a total of two sets of crosses brac-



**Fig. 16.4** (a, b) Sectional view of the cross-bracings placed inside the hollow sphere

ing in the sphere (Fig. 16.4b). The two sets of crosses will be attached to eight places on the surface of the sphere to spread evenly. This arrangement is the most suitable for balancing and evening the distribution of load inside a hollow sphere. Any additional bracings installed have to be properly located by considering the balance of the spinning sphere.

For each cross consisting of a pair of positive and negative charges, the total additional charges added into the system are  $4q$  wherein  $n$  is 2. Since the rest mass of a body is directly related to the electric charge, the actual number of  $n$  can be easily calculated based on the relationship of the mass of the three particles. For example, the ratio of mass of the proton to that of the electron is known to be 1836; thus, the value of  $n$  of a proton can be calculated:

$$\text{Mass of proton} / \text{mass of electron} = 1836$$

$$\text{Mass of proton} = 1836 \times \text{mass of electron}$$

However, the basic mass of electron =  $3q$ , and the mass of each cross-bracing =  $2q$ .

Therefore, the number of cross-bracings is required,  $n = 1836 \times 3q / 2q = 2754$ .

We can ignore the basic mass of proton =  $3q$  which is much less with respect to the value of  $q$  for the calculated  $n$ .

### 16.5.1 New Potential Energy Equation

Based on the pairing concept, all energies observed in the universe are generally believed to be divisible into two types: potential energy and kinetic energy. Even though many forms of energy exist, ultimately each of them can be categorised as either potential or kinetic energy. Potential energy is intrinsic in the form of mass

and due to the position of the body at rest, whereas kinetic energy exists when the body is in motion. The kinetic energy is either converted from the potential energy of the body system or absorbed externally. The energy provided by the unit charges in the new theory can therefore be considered as the potential energy. For a body in motion, it usually has a combination of both potential and kinetic energy. In this section, the derivation of a new mathematical equation is performed.

The new proposed theory indicates the electrical charge,  $q$ , as the only source of energy of an electron. Thus, the well-established mathematical equation that represents the relationship of electrical potential energy in a system is referred. An object may have electric potential energy by virtue of two key elements: its own electric charge and its relative position to other electrically charged objects. The former is considered as appropriate in this study since we are establishing the intrinsic potential energy of an electron. The newly derived equation will relate the potential energy (PE) with the unit electric charge ( $q$ ) and the mass ( $m$ ) of the electron.

It is well established that an electrical potential energy,  $u$ , of a system consisting of unit charge,  $q$ , is given by

$$u = qV$$

wherein  $V$  is the potential and

$$V = q / 4\pi\epsilon_0 r$$

Therefore, for each unit charge,

$$u = q^2 / 4\pi\epsilon_0 r \quad (16.1)$$

where, for an electron,  $r$  is the radius of its sphere and  $\epsilon_0$  is the vacuum permittivity constant.

Using speed = distance/time, where  $c$  is the speed of light and  $t$  is time,

$$c = \frac{2\pi r}{t} \quad \text{and} \quad r = \frac{ct}{2\pi}$$

Replacing  $r$ , Eq. (16.1) becomes

$$u = \frac{q^2}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \frac{2\pi}{ct} = \frac{q^2}{2\epsilon_0 ct}$$

Therefore, potential energy

$$\text{PE} = u = \frac{q^2}{2\epsilon_0 ct} \quad (16.2)$$

Using the de Broglie equation, momentum  $p = \frac{h}{\lambda}$  in which  $h$  is the Planck's constant and  $\lambda$  is the wavelength. Also, using  $c = f\lambda$ , where  $f$  is the frequency, and assuming the velocity of the electron equals the velocity of light  $c$ , we get

$$p = mc = \frac{h}{\lambda} = \frac{hf}{c} \quad \text{or} \quad f = \frac{mc^2}{h}$$

Using  $f = \frac{1}{t}$ , we get

$$f = \frac{1}{t} = \frac{mc^2}{h} \quad (16.3)$$

Substituting Eq. (16.3) into Eq. (16.2) to replace  $t$ ,

$$\text{PE} = \frac{q^2}{2\varepsilon_o ct} = \frac{q^2}{2\varepsilon_o c} \frac{mc^2}{h} = \frac{cmq^2}{2\varepsilon_o h} = n_o mq^2$$

where  $n_o = \frac{c}{2\varepsilon_o h}$  is a constant.

Therefore, we can say potential energy  $\text{PE} \propto mq^2$ .

In the new energy equation, the existing Einstein's equation  $E = mc^2$  is considered as the kinetic energy because it relates to the motion of a body that complies with Newton's second law of motion ( $F = m \times a$ ) whereby work done = Force  $F \times$  distance.

Therefore, for a system of a unit charge, total energy  $E =$  potential energy + kinetic energy:

$$E = n_o q^2 m + mc^2 = m(n_o q^2 + c^2)$$

Substituting the values to find  $n_o$ ,

$$h = 6.626 \times 10^{-34} \text{ kgm}^2 / \text{s}$$

$$c = 3 \times 10^8 \text{ m/s}$$

$$\varepsilon_o = 8.5418 \times 10^{-12} \text{ C}^2 / \text{Nm}^2$$

$$n_o = \frac{c}{2\varepsilon_o h} = 2.65 \times 10^{52} \text{ J} / \text{C}^2 \text{ kg}$$

where J is energy in joules and C is electric charge in coulombs.

### 16.5.2 Compatibility with Modern Physics

The new postulated theory is considerably radical and therefore has to be properly substantiated. Three major aspects of experimental physics are discussed and elaborated, which include the topics of zero point energy, the Stern-Gerlach experiment and lastly the issue that relates to quarks.

### 16.5.2.1 Zero Point Energy (ZPE)

The ZPE refers to the energy of a system at absolute zero temperature  $T=0$  K or the lowest quantised energy level of a quantum mechanical system. It is the energy that remains when all other energy is removed from the system (Casimir 1948). The ZPE is still a mysterious phenomenon. According to Valone (2007) nobody yet can really explain it in a real, non-hypothetical manner. However, it is clearly shown from experimental observations that what is considered as a vacuum actually contains some kind of potential energy in the form of fluctuating electromagnetic waves. Even though its presence can be detected, how much ZPE resides in a vacuum is still precisely unknown.

The mysterious ZPE can possibly be explained when it is related to the potential energy proposed in this study. Each elementary particle of an atom has electric charge and a permanent magnet intrinsically built into it. Therefore, even if at absolute zero when the electron stops spinning, the two basic energies still remain. This energy is given by the potential energy of the system, which can be clearly demonstrated by referring to the proposed energy equation:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Total energy, } E &= \text{PE} + \text{KE} \\ &= m(n_o q^2 + c^2) \end{aligned}$$

From the above equation, even when the kinetic energy KE due to motion is zero at 0 K, the potential energy PE is still present in the system, which is detected and observed as fluctuating electromagnetic waves or what is known as ZPE. Therefore, we can say that the ZPE is actually the potential energy possessed intrinsically and permanently by the subatomic particles, irrespective of temperature. This is shown by the presence of ZPE in practically everything, including our physical bodies and measuring devices (Davies et al. 2006).

### 16.5.2.2 Stern-Gerlach Experiment

The Stern-Gerlach experiment performed in 1922 is a fundamental experiment in order to exhibit the quantisation of spin, thus the magnetic moment of an atom. Since the electron displays an intrinsic angular momentum, a magnetic moment occurs, which follows the form of that for an electron spin. Theoretically, the z-component of the magnetic moment associated with the electron spin would be the Bohr magneton whereby

$$\mu_z = \pm \frac{1}{2} \mu_B \quad \text{where} \quad \mu_B = \frac{e\hbar}{2m_e}$$

where  $e$  is the electric charge,  $m_e$  is mass of the electron and  $\hbar$  is Planck's constant.

But the experimentally measured value is found to be twice the predicted value (i.e.  $\mu_z = \pm \mu_B$ ). This means the above equation is incorrect due to the large discrepancy between the two values. Unable to find the answer why the measured value is double the predicted one, a factor  $g$  is introduced. Taking into account the factor  $g$ , the equation has consequently been rewritten as follows:

$$\mu_z = \pm \frac{1}{2} g \mu_B$$

In physics, the constant  $g$  is called the gyromagnetic ratio or the  $g$ -factor. The electron spin  $g$ -factor has the value  $g=2.00232$  (Hyperphysics 2013).

Why is the measured magnetic field of the electron twice that of the theoretical value? To justify, the scientists introduced a factor to adjust the equation so that the theoretical and experimental values are consistent. If the experiment was correct, then it is obvious that an error was possibly made in the theoretical equation. Weinert (1995) in his paper entitled ‘Wrong Theory – Right Experiment: The Significance of the Stern-Gerlach Experiments’ clearly stated that the Stern-Gerlach findings posed puzzles to the theory. Even though the  $g$  value as a factor to correct the equation is derived from a well-established theory of quantum electrodynamics, there is always a great possibility that something fundamental is missing from the existing theory to fully describe the phenomenon, as emphasised by Weinert (1995). This missing entity seems so detrimental such that the introduction of a factor as a correction to the existing equation is compulsory. It is therefore anticipated that with the introduction of this missing important entity, the existing factor  $g$  is deemed unnecessary.

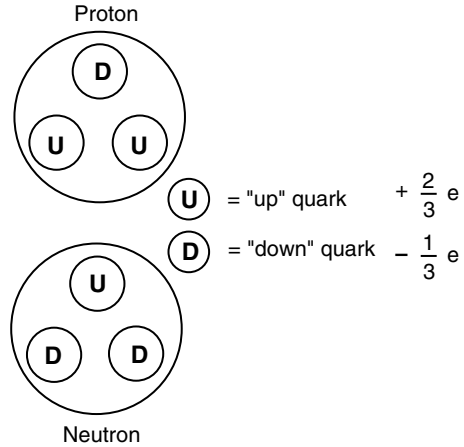
Based on the new proposed theory, the electron also possesses a permanent magnetic field, in addition to the induced one. Therefore, the theoretical deficiency is due to the fact that another type of magnetic field has not been accounted for in the equation; as a result, the calculated value is only half of the actual measured value. From the mathematical derivation performed based on the new proposed theory (Jaafar 2014), the values of permanent and induced magnetic fields are both the same. Thus, the theoretical equation should be double in value. This strongly asserts the possibility of the existence of another magnetic field, which has not been taken into account. Therefore, the new postulation about the existence of an intrinsic magnetic field permanently possessed by an electron is acceptable if based on the finding of the Stern-Gerlach experiment.

### 16.5.2.3 Quarks

Quarks are considered by physicists to be the elementary particles. They are discovered during high-energy particle collisions, but free quarks are never found in nature (Wilczek 2003, 2000; Gell-Mann 1969). Quarks are classified into three pairs: up/down (U/D), charm/strange and top/bottom. The last two pairs are very rarely found in ordinary matter and can thus be ignored.



**Fig. 16.5** The up and down quarks as constituents of a proton and neutron (Source: <http://hyperphysics.phyastr.gsu.edu>)



Unlike electrons and protons, quarks consist of electric charges in proportion of either  $+2/3$  for U or  $-1/3$  for D as shown in Fig. 16.5. Therefore, a proton, which is a  $+1$  charge, would consist of UUD. Meanwhile, a neutron consists of UDD.

In accordance with the new theory, the two charges U and D found in the quark are explained to be the proportion of the charged sphere of both proton and neutron. A proton consists of one positive charge, whilst a neutron comprises one positive and one negative. When the charges of the proton and neutron are combined, the total value becomes three, consisting of two positive and one negative charges. During high-energy collisions in the laboratory, both proton and electron become fragments of charge energy that consist of the positive and negative charges in accordance to the original ratio; thus, the value of the positive charge becomes  $2/3$  and the negative charge becomes  $1/3$ . Therefore, we believe in the possibility that the quark is not really the elementary particle as assumed by particle physicists, but only the fragments of the positive and negative charges contained in the nucleus. This also explains why the quark has never been discovered in nature.

## 16.6 Conclusion and Recommendations

The new quantum theory proposed has opened up a new frontier in the field of high-energy particle physics. It is postulated based on Islamic science principles and relevant Qur'anic verses that the elementary particles of an atom are actually made of electrical charges. The structure of each element and the stages involved in the formation of its charged sphere and associated mass are here clearly described. The new theory also proposes the existence of permanent magnetism in addition to the well-identified induced magnetic field due to its electrical charge. The wave-particle duality phenomenon of an electron is asserted due to the existence of its magnetic fields and electric fields, respectively. Also, a new mathematical equation  $E = mn_e q^2$

is derived to represent the potential energy of the subatomic particles, which complements Einstein's famous equation  $E=mc^2$ .

This new theory could provide a better explanation of the observed phenomena at very low temperatures such as superfluidity and superconductivity. In addition, new innovative products that involve the zero point energy, particularly the micro-electromechanical/nano-electromechanical system (MEMS/NEMS), could be designed. Further research on the extraction of zero point energy (Forward 1984; Cole and Puthoff 1993; Lambrecht 2002; Dannon 2005; Moddel 2009; Munday et al. 2009) by employing the proposed equation is also encouraged. The author foresees that the advancement in this field will create another technological revolution that completely changes the way we live.

Based on these findings, scientific research in the following areas is highly recommended:

- Quantum biology is considered a new field of knowledge, which has been aggressively explored by physicists in the past decade (Engel et al. 2007; Ball 2011; Lipton 2011). By applying the Islamic science principles, coupled with some of the findings proposed here, a new approach is highly recommended for the in-depth study of quantum biology.
- Quantum computer – The newly proposed detail structure of the three elements of an atom and the energy that they possess could be useful in providing the necessary solid foundation for the conceptual design of a quantum computer, which could, for example, solve the 'decoherence' problem.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The quantum computer is extremely sensitive to its surroundings, the interaction with which could lead to collapse of the state function, also called 'decoherence', resulting in computational errors.

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**Part V**  
**Tawhidic Science: Bioethics**

# Chapter 17

## Breakthroughs in Biosciences and the Question of Morality: Interactions Between Ethics and Bioscience Practices

Abdurezak Abdulahi Hashi

**Abstract** In the last four decades, scientific discoveries in the field of biosciences exhibited a progress that is remarkably ascending and covers issues which were traditionally not in the domains of ordinary medical science, including stem cell research, tissue engineering, surrogate motherhood, artificial insemination and test-tube babies as well as the mass scale production of genetically modified food. Nevertheless, as recent scientific breakthroughs involve critical issues related to human biology and health sciences, as well as to the sustainability of the natural environment, the place of moral values in modern breakthroughs and practices of biosciences emerge as matters of concern among scientists and scholars of ethics. One of the primary questions of this concern is related to whether or not scientific progress ought to be guided by what man ought to do, rather than what man can do. Similar issues are raised about the relationship between the applications of scientific discoveries and moral values. This research uses an analytical method and aims to present a comparative account of the bioethical discussions on the interactions between moral values and scientific discoveries in the field of bioscience.

### 17.1 Introduction

Bioscience is the field of medicine based on the application of the principles of the natural sciences, especially biology and biochemistry. Bioscience has made remarkable breakthroughs in the last four decades or so and has enabled scientists in the field to expand the scope of the natural and health sciences. Discoveries in environmental sciences, DNA sequencing techniques, regenerative and wound healing technologies, artificial insemination and test-tube babies, tissue engineering and

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stem cell research and cloning are among the modern frontiers of bioscience. However, as these techniques and practices involve human subjects, various moral and legal concerns have been raised.<sup>1</sup> Among basic questions in this regard are: How does one produce new medicine without violating the sanctity of the human body? What are the ethical limits of advancing scientific experimentations that involve human subjects? Can scientific achievements in this field justify the morality of certain practices in bioscience such as organ transplant, artificial insemination, technology of regenerative medicine and tissue engineering, as well as cosmetic surgery and cloning? Likewise, given the fact that bioscientists are breaking new ground in their scientific understanding, is it moral to limit these breakthroughs with the reason that their discoveries may pose a future threat to human life? Similarly, given the fact that advances in both bioscience and morality are important, the question is how to increase these advances and thereby improve our knowledge in biology with due ethical considerations. This article aims to illustrate a comparative account on the debates about the interactions between breakthroughs in bioscience and ethical values.

## 17.2 Definition and History of Bioethics

Bioethics is an academic discipline that covers moral and legal concerns about the scientific and technological progress in the field of biotechnology and biomedicine. The term ‘bioethics’ consists of two words, ‘bio’ and ‘ethics’; the former is derived from the Greek root ‘bios’, or life (living organism or biology), while the latter is from the Greek ‘ethos’, i.e. behaviour. The combination of the two words means the ‘moral behaviour towards life’ (Online Etymology Dictionary 2013).<sup>2</sup> It is the subject that addresses legal and ethical implications of biomedical practices like tissue engineering, regenerative medicine, artificial insemination, cosmetic surgery, test-tube babies, organ transplantation and genetically modified food. Encyclopaedia Britannica (2015) states that bioethics is a ‘branch of applied ethics that studies the philosophical, social, and legal issues in medicine and the life sciences’.<sup>3</sup> At the heart of bioethical discussions is the concern about protecting human dignity, the natural environment, the safety of life as well as lifestyle enhancement and in the meantime increasing scientific advances in the field of biosciences. Bioethics is different from traditional medical ethics since the latter focuses ‘exclusively on the professional ethics of the physician and the doctor-patient relationship’ (Boyd et al. 1997, p. 23). However, bioethics refers ‘to the broader terrain of the life sciences, encompassing medicine, biology, and some aspects of the environmental, population, and social sciences’ (Boyd et al. 1997, p. 23). Likewise, the scope of

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<sup>1</sup>Further readings on these issues are available in Hashi (2015), Connor and Fuenzalida-Puelma (1990), Lolas (2008), Potter (1970, 1971), and Ramsey (1970).

<sup>2</sup>Entry ‘Bioethics’, *Online Etymology Dictionary* (2013).

<sup>3</sup>Entry ‘Bioethics’, *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (2015).

medical ethics, in the traditional sense, covers moral discussions on doctor-patient relationship, whereby ‘medical ethics was almost exclusively the domain of physicians ... bioethics encompasses the work of many disciplines’ (Boyd et al. 1997, p. 23).

Although topics of bioethics were traditionally addressed under medical ethics, since the early twentieth century, bioethics became an independent discipline that functions as a link between biology, ecology, medicine, law and moral values. Indeed, from the late 1920s and the subsequent decades of the last century,<sup>4</sup> bioethics appeared as an independent discipline, and later in the early 1970s, this discipline ‘came into existence in a rudimentary way’ (Jecker et al. 2007). The term ‘bioethics’ was coined in 1927 by Fritz Jahr, who anticipated many of the arguments and discussions now current in biological research involving animals – in an article about the ‘bioethical imperative’ (Lolas 2008), as he called it – regarding the scientific use of animals and plants. It was highlighted further in the writings of American biologist Van Rensselaer Potter who specialised in cancer and related diseases. In the early 1970s, Potter wrote a number of works on bioethics including his article ‘Bioethics: The Science of Survival’ (Potter 1970) and his book *Bioethics: Bridge to the Future* (Potter 1971). His writings contributed to the establishment of bioethics, which subsequently emerged as an independent academic discipline. Bioethical institutions were later established, while ethical declarations addressing ethical and legal frameworks of the practices of biomedicine became standard (Hashi 2015; Jecker et al. 2007).

### 17.3 Bioethical Discussions on the Interactions between Science and Ethics

Since the early twentieth century, bioethics has been the subject of study of both scientists and ethicists. These studies cover imperative questions on the scope and limitations of scientific knowledge related to the modification of human genetics, particularly biomedical practices like tissue engineering, artificial insemination, cosmetic surgery, etc. Basic questions in this field include, among others: should the breakthroughs in biomedical sciences be left to the scientists in such a way that these scientists could conduct every possible scientific experiment in the field of biomedicine and thus expand their knowledge regardless of any social or moral implications of such experiments? If yes, to what extent? If no, based on whose authority? Some bioethicists are optimistic about modern scientific breakthroughs and discoveries in biomedicine, while there are those who exhibit pessimism towards the breakthroughs in biomedicine and argue that optimism towards biomedical advances in the biology field is premature and does not reflect the reality of modern breakthroughs in this field. There are also those bioethicists who disagree

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<sup>4</sup>Further details about the history of bioethics are available in Jecker et al. (2007).



with both outright optimism and outright pessimism towards the scientific advances in biomedicine and suggest a more realistic approach in which ethical and legal issues of biomedicine and biotechnology are solved on a case-by-case basis. Hence, the discussion on the interactions between scientific breakthroughs and moral values is actually a discussion on the relationship between what can be done and what ought to be done, as well as which of these two dimensions should govern the other. Thus, bioethical discussions on the interactions between modern breakthroughs in biomedical technology and ethics could be divided into three approaches.<sup>5</sup>

Among the scholars of bioethics are those scholars and scientists who exhibit pro-scientific tendencies, in which priority is given to the expansion of scientific knowledge, with less emphasis on the ethical dimensions of the progress in science. With the spirit of conquering nature, this bioethical approach aims to expand man's understanding of natural phenomena through scientific methods. Hence, it calls for the unlimited expansion of discoveries in all areas of sciences. This is so because this approach believes that expanding or widening man's understanding of nature is a worthwhile activity. Therefore, scientific experiments that are designed to increase our knowledge should be allowed to take their normal course, and the available technology of biomedicine and other scientific fields should be applied without obstacles. In modern history, the roots of this tendency can be traced back to *The New Atlantis* by Francis Bacon (d. 1626 CE), who said: 'the end of our foundation is the knowledge of causes, and secret motions of things; and the enlarging of the bounds of human empire, to the effecting of all things possible' (Bacon 1627). Proponents of the pro-scientific approach like Bacon exhibited the tendency towards unlimited scientific progress, 'an anticipation that recognised only one value that is, to maximise man's ability to achieve infinite scientific discoveries, including in the field of biology and biomedicine' (Hashi 2015, p. 53).

In this approach, given that man's understanding grows day by day, whereby the 'progress in science is remarkably ascending, and covers issues which were traditionally outside the domains of ordinary science ... to expand man's knowledge of science into new territory, scientists are ethically bounded to enhance their discoveries, so that man can master and control the laws of natural phenomena, including bioscience' (Hashi 2015, p. 52). Belgian philosopher and bioethicist Gilbert Hottois is among those who have exhibited pro-scientific tendencies that accept pursuing unlimited scientific experimentation and the expansion of experimental or laboratory research, in such a way that 'we shall not hesitate to conduct any experiment that can lead us to explore all potentials of living and non-living things' (Taguieff n.d., p. 3).

Given the nature of natural phenomena, this approach is primarily concerned about whether certain potential scientific discoveries can be made. Then, if such discoveries are possible and thus our scientific knowledge is expanded, potential scientific experiments and discoveries are morally justified by the possibility of achieving more in science. Hence, in the eyes of this approach, 'we ought to let the

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<sup>5</sup>Further details about the perspectives and approaches of bioethics are available in Bryant et al. (2005), Taguieff (n.d.), Connor and Fuenzalida-Puelma (1990) and Steinbock (2007).

scientists, including those of biomedicine, do their jobs freely without constraints. In the progress of biomedical practices and the application of such practices to human biology, this approach argues that, what can be achieved and what ought to be achieved in the field of science are eventually the same' (Hashi 2015, p. 52). According to this perspective, we ought to do what we can do in upgrading our scientific knowledge in biology, medicine, chemistry, physics and other fields of science. With regard to scientific advances in biomedicine, this approach urges that if it is possible to improve the quality of human biology and health care through biomedical advances, then that is what we ought to do. As this approach calls for unlimited growth of scientific knowledge, critics argue that such approach might eventually lead to unethical growth of what man can do in the field of science.

Within the bioethical debates, another approach presents a pro-ethical argument towards modern breakthroughs in the biosciences. Contrary to the position held by the pro-scientific approach towards bioscience development, proponents of the pro-ethical approach argue that in the process of creating synergies between progress in bioscience and ethics, priority should be given to the latter over the former. In principle, this approach acknowledges the positive outcome of the scientific progress to date in various fields of science such as medicine, physics, chemistry and information technology, and it commands also the importance of making further scientific discoveries in the future. The pro-ethical approach states, however, that scientific discoveries have to be conducted within the norms of morality. This is so because, like other forms of human conduct, scientific discoveries have to be led by the standards of what ought to be. For instance, like other human activities such as business, administration, law, leadership, engineering and other forms of human conduct that are accomplished within the parameters of moral values, scientific progress also ought to be conducted according to moral norms. Furthermore, given that biosciences deal with living things and the natural environment, the mishandling of which poses a real and imminent threat to life; breakthroughs in biosciences should be guided by the attitude of discovering what ought to be, not what can be done. In instances in which there is contradiction between what ought to be and what can be achieved in the field of biomedicine, then the former overrides the latter, whereby men of science ought to do scientific researches that are morally worthy.

With a clear contrast to the optimism exhibited by the pro-scientific approach towards progress in the biosciences, the pro-ethical approach holds more pessimistic views about the breakthroughs, particularly biomedical advances and its applications in human biology, unless and until the progress in biosciences is regulated by principles of what ought to be. For instance, biomedical practices such as genetic manipulation, cell and tissue engineering, artificial insemination, surrogate motherhood technology, genetically modified food and other forms of biomedicine make the human body as an entirely experimental entity that can be changed and redesigned according to the whims of scientists, a process in which the sanctity of the human body is lost. Hence, unless such biomedical practices are guided by moral norms, progress and technological breakthroughs in the field of biosciences will lead humanity to an evil end and represent an imminent threat to the essence of human life. According to the proponents of this approach, like the German

philosopher and bioethicist Hans Jonas,<sup>6</sup> modern biomedical practices pose a real threat to mankind and to the living environment, unless these practices are carried out with a due moral sense. Hence priority should be given to the safety of life and the sanctity of the human body, in such a way that in this field scientists are tasked to achieve only what ought to be achieved. In his important work on the importance of moral responsibility, namely, *The Imperative of Responsibility*, Jonas contended that moral sense is needed in the progress of science, so that the threats posed by modern technology and scientific progress in science are prevented. This is so because, although modern advances in the field of biotechnology and biomedicine were initially designed to serve humanity, today this technology threatens not only human life, but the very essence of man. Hence in Jonas' view, success in biomedicine becomes a great challenge facing modern man. He insisted: 'act so that the effects of your action are compatible with the permanence of genuine human life' (Jonas 1984, p. 11). Furthermore, in warning us about the threats of unregulated scientific progress, he added that modern technological breakthroughs are:

...invested with unprecedented strength by science, which also pushes the economy into uncontrolled expansion, requires a system of ethics involving freely accepted constraints to prevent the power of human beings from becoming a curse for them (Council of Europe 2001, p. 47).

It is true that biomedical technology was always in process. Health professionals have often used new techniques and practices, to offer healing and therapeutic treatments to patients. However, pro-ethical bioethicists, like Jonas, argue that new discoveries of biomedicine, such as test-tube babies and artificial insemination, cosmetic surgery and gender reassignment practices, have shown the vulnerability of human dignity and existence, the consequences of which cannot be predicted (Council of Europe 2001, p. 47). In line with the old wisdoms that state 'prevention is better than cure' and 'it is better to be safe than sorry', pro-ethical bioethicists like Jonas argue for ethical progress in biomedicine, in such a way that issues of safety and prevention of looming risks of genetic manipulation technology on the human body are given priority. Hence, the pro-ethical approach calls for

ethical regulation of what man can actually do. A responsible approach must be forged that takes the dignity of mankind and the continuity of human life into account. It is not too late to think about how to keep mankind safe from looming threats, which not only risk present human life, but may also affect future generations. Likewise, if it is true that the best defence is a good offence, then it is time to take responsible pre-emptive measures that protect man from the far reaching consequences of genetic modification technology. (Hashi 2015, p. 55)

Taking this approach, we must 'track down the danger before it's too late' (Bazin 2004).

Therefore, unlike the pro-scientific progress approach, the position of which is driven by the motive of conquering the natural world, as well as by egotistic tendencies that are present in widespread wasteful consumption; the pro-ethical approach

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<sup>6</sup>Hans Jonas was one of the first philosophers to write at length about the emerging questions of ethics in advanced biomedical practice.

of bioethics invites us to develop sciences, according to and within the ranges of the safety of man and human dignity, not only for the interest of humanity today but also for generations to come. Hence, unless and until we are able to control and limit new biomedical practices and technologies to beneficial developments, biomedical technology will certainly lead to a 'catastrophic end' and thus threatens not only present populations but also future generations.

Besides the pro-ethical and pro-scientific approaches, there is a third bioethical approach, the proponents of which disagree with the previously discussed approaches of bioethics. It argues that both pro-ethical and pro-scientific approaches reflect unnecessary idealisations of bioethics and that pro-scientific versus pro-ethics positions in bioethics lead us to unrealistic conclusions in this field. Hence this approach argues for adopting a pragmatic response to the challenges of scientific progress in the field of biomedicine. This is because there are cases in which men of science ought to achieve more in the discovery of scientific knowledge, while there are instances in which scientific progress needs to be ruled by moral norms. Therefore, a pragmatic and evidence-based approach in which given issues and problems in the field of bioethics are solved on a case-by-case basis is the way forward.

Hence, this approach contends for finding the middle way, in which scientists are not prevented from expanding the stock of scientific knowledge in bioscience, while the well-being of man and the environment is not risked, now or in the future. With this complexity in mind, the proponents of pragmatic responses in biomedical practices argue that bioethics is an enquiry of building an acceptable 'consensus' or an agreeable opinion of the 'mainstream' on given biomedical issues (Taguieff n.d., p. 8). Scholars who wrote on the moral debates of bioethical practices like Ololade Olakanmi (2006, p. 39) called this approach 'a rational choice' in given circumstances and cases. This 'rational choice' might not necessarily be driven from traditional or metaphysical perspectives, but it is rather a purely secular and humanistic choice which takes peoples' consensus into account Olakanmi (2006, p. 39). In this understanding, the right thing to do does not necessarily relate to all that 'can be achieved' or all that 'ought to be achieved' at all times, neither the former drives the latter nor otherwise. Rather it is about what is the rational choice in any given circumstance (Hashi 2015, p. 57). This is tantamount to the statement: 'the right action is the best action, that is, the one that maximises the good or expected good' (Olakanmi 2006, p. 39) In his article, Bioethics: Towards Intellectual Issue, Pierre-André Taguieff seemed to agree with Olakanmi's contention for rational choice in principle, but suggested that rational choice needs to be accompanied with what ought to be done, in a way that what is 'rational' now also becomes what man 'ought to do'. However, to achieve such a combination, one needs to apply universal values which are guided by the norms of human equality and human dignity (Taguieff n.d., p. 8). In support of the idea of 'rational choice', bioethicists such as Duran equate biomedical ethics to the 'search for what requires respecting human life and dignity in the field of biomedicine' (Taguieff n.d., p. 8). This approach argues for a rational choice and the attitude of building a realistic position on given issues of biomedical practices, an approach that seem to be convincing. However,

regardless of how well the bioethical contention of this approach is presented, one challenging question directed to this approach is: what are the mechanisms of building consensus on given ethical problems in biomedical breakthroughs? Similarly, in the instances of having real moral challenges on the prioritisation of given ethical choices including the moral dilemmas of pro-choices (abortion) versus pro-life, decision-making on quantity versus quality (distribution of medicine to given patients), freedom versus control (contraception and birth control), truth telling versus deception (diagnosing patients with serious diseases), as well as research-based knowledge versus personal beliefs, then in these examples and perhaps in many others, whose right is the rationale choice?

## 17.4 Concluding Remarks

Ethics addresses what ought to be done, while science presents a descriptive account of the rules of the natural or observable world. Further, science reflects the human initiative to understand how the visible world functions, while ethics guides human conduct so that man lives in a dignified and decent manner. Therefore, the idea of combining ethical values and scientific progress is indeed an important and timely necessity. However, given the fact that science is a dynamic subject that is in constant transition and thus includes new fields and practices, which seem to be in contradiction with established ethical norms, the combination of these two fields is not free of challenges, particularly in the issues of prioritising between ethical duties and scientific practices. In general, scholars of the field, as illustrated in the above discussions, are in agreement on the importance of ethics and science, but do not necessarily agree on the formula of combining ethics and science. Pro-scientific progress bioethicists argue that scientific progress and technological advances should be left to the scientists, in the sense that what 'can' be done scientifically should not be limited by what 'ought' to be done. In contrast, the pro-ethical position holds that man's scientific practices should be governed by what ought to be done, not what can be done. Thus, according to this group of bioethicists, scientific progress in the field of biology should not only be placed under strict moral observation, but certain techniques in biomedical practices should also be prevented. A third group of bioethicists seem to suggest a middle path of rational choice in which issues are judged on a case-by-case basis. These intellectual debates on the interaction between science and morality are indeed fruitful, and such dialogues have enriched our understanding of issues and practices on this important subject. Thus, the continuation of these kinds of intellectual debates on modern biomedical practices is indeed a commendable task.

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# Chapter 18

## Implementation of an Islamic Approach to Harm Reduction Among Illicit Drug Users in Malaysia

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and Adeeba Kamarulzaman

**Abstract** The concept of harm reduction, which refers to policies, programmes and practices that aim at reducing the harm associated with the use of psychoactive drugs, is a means to address the problem of the increasing number of HIV infections among drug users. When the concept of harm reduction was introduced in Malaysia in October 2005 and implemented in 2006, the strategy was initially met with opposition and scepticism, to the extent of it being regarded as something of Western origin and un-Islamic. In response to the escalation of the HIV epidemic among people who inject drugs in Malaysia, the majority of whom are Malay Muslims, the Government approved the implementation of harm reduction programmes, which involved needle syringe and methadone maintenance. A recent evaluation of these programmes has shown them to be cost-effective as well as averting approximately 12,000 new HIV infections. It is critical for success of this programme – and for its future expansion – that increased awareness and understanding of the concept of harm reduction from the Islamic perspective be achieved. The focus of these efforts has been primarily on the preservation and protection of human life and dignity, as well as steering man away from harm and destruction. This research discusses the harm reduction programme implemented in Malaysia from the Islamic perspective.

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## 18.1 Introduction

Illicit drug use leads to various negative health consequences including the risk associated with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). Despite drug use being prohibited in Islam, illicit drug use is widespread in many Islamic countries (Kamarulzaman and Saifuddeen 2010).

Malaysia has recorded more than 98,000 HIV infections since its first reported case in 1986 until December 2012 (Naning et al. 2014), of which approximately half are attributed to the injection of opioids (Wickersham et al. 2013). To address this situation, Malaysia in October 2005 introduced the needle syringe exchange and methadone maintenance treatment (MMT) programmes as part of a harm reduction strategy to reduce the transmission of HIV among people who inject illicit drugs (Wickersham et al. 2013; Naning et al. 2014).

## 18.2 Methadone Maintenance Treatment as a Harm Reduction Approach

Harm reduction refers to policies, programmes, services, projects and practices that work to reduce not only harm to health but also the social and economic harm to individuals, communities and society (Safian 2010). In relation to injecting drug use, harm reduction is a public health philosophy and an intervention that seeks to reduce the harm associated with drug use and ineffective drug policies. The success of the harm reduction programme is measured in terms of the quality of life and health of an individual or community involved in the programme. This programme also helps to identify and solve problems based on current laws and regulations in reducing the risk of drug users being infected by HIV/AIDS.

The usage of methadone was initially proposed by the World Health Organization (WHO) as an essential medicine for treating substance abuse problems (Baharom et al. 2012). It is a long-acting synthetic opioid and had been used previously as a pain reliever. Numerous studies have shown the effectiveness of methadone in reducing HIV incidence through reducing drug use.

Many countries find the problem of drug use a big challenge. Leaders, both political and religious, have various views on using methadone to tackle the problem of injected drug use and the HIV/AIDS epidemic. In Malaysia, during the initial stages of the introduction of MMT as part of the harm reduction programme, there was initial opposition and scepticism. Some even regarded this approach as something of Western origin and un-Islamic (Naning et al. 2014).



### 18.3 Drugs from the Islamic Perspective

Muslims are generally prohibited from taking any medicine which contains *muḥarramah* (unlawful ingredients), such as alcohol, pork or non-halal meat. However, there are exceptions on this matter under conditions of *ḍarūrah* (necessity). Certain drugs are categorised as *al-khamr* or intoxicants that are prohibited in Islam. A study by Mohd Safian (2010) provided a summary comparing the characteristics of *al-khamr* and narcotic drugs according to Muslim jurists (Table 18.1).

From the above comparison, it can be seen that receiving medicine containing religiously prohibited substances is only permissible under very strict conditions (Safian 2010). These conditions are as follows: (i) The patient's life is endangered if he does not take this medicine; (ii) no alternative or substitute medication made from entirely *ḥalāl* (lawful) sources is available; and (iii) the medication is prescribed by a Muslim physician who is knowledgeable as well as God fearing.

Islamic scholars in Malaysia have decreed that the illicit use of drugs is prohibited (*ḥarām*) because they can cause intoxication. The Muzakarah (Conference) of the Fatwa Committee held on 15–16 April 1982 decreed that:

1. Any form of abuse including drug abuse is prohibited.
2. Drugs can only be consumed for medicinal purposes if they meet *Sharī'ah* requirements.

### 18.4 Harm Reduction from the Islamic Perspective

The *maqasid al-sharī'ah* (higher objectives of Islamic law) provide a practical framework when tackling ethical dilemmas and issues (Saifuddeen et al. 2013). In general, this framework is divided into three levels, which are necessities (*ḍarūriyyah*), needs (*ḥājīyyah*) and luxuries (*taḥsīniyyah*) (Auda 2008). *Ḍarūriyyah* are all important needs that need to be fulfilled and are considered essential for human life. The five aspects of the preservation and protection of the dignity of mankind in *ḍarūriyyah* are faith, life, intellect, progeny and wealth. While *ḥājīyyah* means everything that is important for humans to survive, but compared to *ḍarūriyyah*, it is considered less essential. Finally, *taḥsīniyyah* are the least important compared to the first two categories. *Taḥsīniyyah* refer to luxuries and comforts that are considered less important or as embellishments.

The implementation of harm reduction towards drug users can be seen as a solution to address the *maqasid al-sharī'ah*, or the higher objectives of Islamic law. The concept of *ḍarūriyyah* is applied in harm reduction implementation (Kamarulzaman and Saifuddeen 2010). In a situation where there is a need, something that is forbidden in Islam may be allowed. The methadone maintenance therapy (MMT) and needle exchange programmes are seen as important in protecting and preserving the five aspects of *ḍarūriyyah*.

**Table 18.1** Comparison of characteristics between *al-khamr* and narcotic drugs

Characteristics	<i>Al-khamr</i>	Narcotic drugs
Jurists attitude towards the substance	All Muslim jurists are unanimous on <i>al-khamr</i> being totally prohibited	Muslim jurists, especially the ancient authorities, were in dispute regarding the rule of narcotic consumption
Degree of prohibition	<i>Al-khamr</i> is totally prohibited, including its trading, buying, selling, transporting and serving	Majority of jurists held that drugs do not carry total prohibition like <i>al-khamr</i> . Only prohibited when it is fatal and intoxicating
The cause ( <i>'illa</i> ) of prohibition	Jurists unanimously agree that the cause of the prohibition is that it is an intoxicant. Some also added that another cause of the prohibition was because it is considered <i>najas</i> (unclean). Others associated aggressive behaviour resulting from wine drinking as the cause for its prohibition	Muslim jurists differed in their views on the cause of the prohibition of drugs. Some, like Ibn Taimiyyah, argued that drugs are prohibited because of its intoxicant effect. Al-Qarafi argued that some drugs like <i>hashish</i> only carry the corruptive effects, and are not intoxicants
The purity status of the item	<i>Al-khamr</i> itself is considered as a religiously impure item, which cannot be taken to perform prayer	The status of the purity of narcotic drugs is disputed. The majority ruled that drugs or herbs are clean. However, Ibn Taimiyyah ruled that they are ritually unclean like <i>al-khamr</i>
The effects on body and physiology	It causes people to become intoxicated	It differs according to different types of drugs and the persons. The negative consequences: losing appetite, losing mind and unconsciousness. The effects – people getting high, happy, releasing pressure, feeling energetic
The effects on the surrounding environment	Social effects: getting aggressive as a result of drunkenness, causing violence against others	Drug users may need to resort to stealing from others to pay for their addiction
The effects on actions of the person under influence of the substance	People are responsible for all acts done under the influence of <i>al-khamr</i> as consumption of <i>al-khamr</i> is not considered as a valid excuse since its consumption is illegal	Many jurists agreed that a person under the influence of legal drug consumption is not responsible for all their acts. However, the person is responsible for his actions if the drug taken was illegal
The volume of permitted consumption	Wine cannot be consumed regardless of the volume	The majority maintained that drugs can be consumed in small quantities especially for medical treatment, but they cannot be consumed for recreational purposes
The consumption of seeking for pleasure and joy	Totally forbidden	The majority prohibited it

(continued)

**Table 18.1** (continued)

Characteristics	<i>Al-khamr</i>	Narcotic drugs
The consumption in a <i>ḍarūrah</i> (urgent or emergency) situation	The majority prohibited it in all <i>ḍarūrah</i> situations except to release someone from choking	The majority argued drugs can be used in this situation
The consumption for medication	Majority of Muslims disagreed. Only Hanafis permitted it	Majority agreed with the permissibility especially when there is no other lawful alternative

Several provisions as legal maxims (*al-qawā'id al-fiqhiyyah*) found in the *Shari'ah* could be invoked in relation to harm reduction (Kamarulzaman and Saifuddeen 2010). These include *la ḍarara wa la ḍirar* (no one should be hurt or cause hurt to others), *al-ḍarūrāt tubīḥ al-maḥzurāt* (necessities overruling prohibition), *daf'u al-ḍarar wa jalb al-manfa'āt* (harm must be treated and benefits must be brought forth) and *dar al-mafāsīd muqaddam 'alā jalb al-maṣāliḥ* (public interest is prioritised over personal interest).

In the case of MMT, the permissibility should also be based on the premise that the methadone taken should only be consumed in order to prevent a greater harm (*mā ubīḥu li'l-ḍarūrah yuqaddu bi-qadariha*) (Abu Mansur 2011). This provision stresses that methadone should only be given at its necessary dosage as prescribed by the doctor.

Harm reduction is therefore regarded as a preventive method to curb a greater public health problem such as HIV infection.

## 18.5 Assessment of Implementation of Harm Reduction Programme in Malaysia

From 2006 when the harm reduction programme was introduced and implemented until 2013, the Government of Malaysia invested RM92 million. During that period (2006–2013), an estimated 21,000 new HIV infections took place. A recently published report found that in the absence of the harm reduction programme, there would have been a further 12,600 new HIV infections (Naning et al. 2014). While the Government of Malaysia spent RM92 million over an eight-year period for harm reduction, it has saved RM47 million in the same period via the aversion of 12,600 new HIV cases.

From these statistics, it is noted that the higher purposes of Islamic law, i.e. to preserve the faith, life, intellect, progeny and wealth of individuals and society, are realised through the implementation of the harm reduction programme.

## 18.6 Conclusion

The harm reduction approach has proven to be successful in Malaysia. While there was initial scepticism and opposition, the programme's effectiveness in controlling the number of new HIV cases is now apparent through the statistics released in 2014 (Naning et al. 2014).

The permissibility of the harm reduction programme is based on the framework of *maqasid al-shari'ah* which preserves and protects faith, life, intellect, progeny and wealth. All have a role to play in ensuring that HIV/AIDS is kept under control, and this can only be done through effective programmes that are supported by all, including Muslims.

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# Chapter 19

## Genetically Modified Food and Humanity's Well-Being: An Islamic Perspective

Elmira Akhmetova

**Abstract** The fundamental aim of science and knowledge in Islam is the search for truth in the way of benefitting mankind. Genetically modified (GM) technology is one of the significant achievements of modern science, which promises to create an essential and sustainable way to feed the world and provide food security. Farmers today in many countries adopt GM crops, which have been modified with traits intended to provide benefits to farmers, consumers, and industry. These traits include improved shelf-life, disease resistance, stress resistance, herbicide resistance, and pest resistance, production of useful goods such as biofuel or drugs, and the ability to absorb toxins. Yet, results from recent research are critical of GM foods on several grounds, including safety and health issues, and environmental, political, and economic concerns. Another concern is that GM seeds, and potentially animals, are subject to intellectual property rights owned by multinational corporations. This article reviews the issue of GM food from religious, social, and ethical-based perspectives. After discussing the constructive and doubtful aspects of GM foods, this article suggests that more independent studies should be conducted on the safety of GM production. Also, mandatory labelling for foods containing GM ingredients is recommended to be introduced since buyers have the right to know the quality and characteristics of commodities they purchase.

### 19.1 Introduction

Islam advocates scientific and technological developments for the benefit and well-being of humanity. Genetically modified (GM) technology is one of the major achievements of modern science, which promises to create a sustainable way to satiate world hunger, while providing food security. Within the last decade, the rapid growth in biotech farming has been evident. Farmers today have begun to widely adopt GM crops, which have been modified with traits intended to provide benefits to farmers, consumers, and industry. Yet, these technological advantages in

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the mass manufacturing of foods have drastically altered the content of what we consume. Results of a number of recent studies are critical of GM foods on several grounds, including safety and health issues, and environmental, political, and economic concerns. There are many questions with regard to GM food: Is it safe to consume? Are there any side effects for those who consume GM food in the long term? And, for Muslim consumers, the most essential question is whether GM food is *halāl* (lawful) to consume or not. This article is therefore a review of GM food from religious, bioethical, social, and environmental perspectives.

## 19.2 Overview

Genetically modified foods are foods produced from organisms that have had specific changes introduced into their DNA using the genetic engineering methods. In most cases, genetic alteration involves the insertion of a foreign gene into the original genetic material. These foreign genes may originate either from plants or animals. In the process of forming a GM crop, a bacterial vector is required as a vehicle to transport the selected genetic material from one species to another. The foreign gene is first inserted into the bacterial vector. The vector containing the foreign gene is, in turn, transferred into the plant to be genetically modified. The deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA), which contains the gene code from the foreign gene, would then replicate itself in the plant. The part of the plant with the foreign gene is cultured and used to form a new type of plant. This new type of plant is called the GM crop, which would then produce the GM food (Salleh 2013).

The modern marvels of GM food and transgenic plants have come to light in the last few decades only. The scientific discoveries in the 1980s expressed that specific parts of DNA could be transferred from one organism to another, and this finding became the basis of genetic modification development. In 1983, the first transgenic plant, a tobacco plant resistant to antibiotics, was created. Since the late 1990s, transgenic corn, soybeans, and cotton – mostly engineered to resist insects and herbicides – have been widely planted in the United States and in a smattering of other large agricultural countries, including Brazil and Canada; the corn and soybean crops go mainly into animal feed, biofuels, and cooking oils. On 13 February 2014, the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-Biotech Applications (ISAAA) released a report, which indicated that more than 18 million farmers in 27 countries planted biotech crops in 2013, reflecting a five million or 3 % increase in global biotech crop hectares over 12 months. Global biotech crop hectares have increased from 1.7 million hectares in 1996 to over 175 million hectares in 2013. During this period, more than a 100-fold increase of commercial biotech crop hectares has been reported. The United States continues to lead global biotech crop plantings at 70.1 million hectares or 40 % of total global hectares (ISAAA 2014).

GM technology attracts farmers, including here in the South-East Asian region, due to certain advantages, such as purported insect resistance; fungal, viral, and bacterial resistance; herbicide tolerance; improved shelf-life; and agronomic prop-

erties. Due to such traits, genetic modification is expected to boost the productivity of crops, thus promising to satiate world hunger in the future.

The global population is expected to reach more than nine billion by 2050. The increased demand for food is accordingly believed to rise substantially from 2013 levels by between 70 and 100 % by mid-century (Rotman 2013). According to economists, although agricultural productivity has improved dramatically over the past 50 years, it will be inadequate to satiate world hunger and the growing appetites of wealthier populations. In addition, various plant diseases remain a costly issue for farmers worldwide, requiring them to douse their crops frequently with fungicides. Despite the heavy use of fungicides, late blight and other plant diseases ruin an estimated one-fifth of the world's potatoes, a food increasingly grown in China and India. Stem rust, a fungal disease of wheat, has spread throughout much of Africa and the Arabian Peninsula and is now threatening the vast growing regions of Central and South Asia, which produce some 20 % of the world's wheat supply (Rotman 2013). In all these cases, genetic engineering proposes to protect the world's food supply and create food security. Yet, some recent studies strongly challenged claims for the potential and safety of GM foods. The following section of the article discusses these concerns related to health, ethics, and perceived benefits.

### 19.3 Debate on the Benefits and Predicted Harms of GM Food

There is a certain scientific view that food available in the market derived from GM crops poses no greater risk to human health than conventional food (Dasgupta 2014). FAO (Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations) and WHO (World Health Organisation) concluded in 1996 that GM crops then were fundamentally of the same nature as those that arise from conventional plant breeding (Shinwari et al. 2004, p. 23). Yet, there are only a handful of studies in the peer-reviewed literature addressing the safety of GM foods. Significantly, the safety of food derived from GM crops or animals in long-term consumption has not been thoroughly analysed scientifically. A number of specialists subsequently adopt a precautionary approach towards the acceptance of GM plants in mass production. Their main concern is that genetic engineering manipulates microorganisms in ways about which we know very little, and the use of transgenes in food may lead to catastrophic consequences regarding health, well-being, and the environment (Moosa 2009, p. 146).

Strong objections to GM organisms (GMOs) in food chains have recently been increasing. Opponents suggest that the insertion of foreign genes into crops could create a list of health hazards. For example, the new peer-reviewed long-term study of the effects from a diet of a mixture of GMO Monsanto maize and Monsanto *Roundup Ready* soya on the internal organs of pigs ran by a scientific group led by Dr. Judy Carman of the Institute of Health and Environmental Research in Australia

showed alarming results. The study ran for 22.7 weeks, the normal lifespan of a commercial pig from weaning to slaughter. The scientists measured feed intake, weight gain, mortality, and blood biochemistry. Organ weights and pathology were determined post-mortem. Also, those doing the autopsy were not told which group of pigs they were examining, so as to avoid bias. In the female pigs, the scientists found that the weight of the uterus of those fed the GM diet per weight of the whole pig was 25 % larger than the control group. Among the possible pathologies indicated in the uterus were endometrial hyperplasia or carcinoma, endometritis, endometriosis, adenomyosis, inflammation, a thickening of the myometrium, and the presence of polyps. The researchers witnessed higher rates of intestinal problems in pigs fed the GMO diet, including inflammation of the stomach and small intestine, stomach ulcers, a thinning of intestinal walls, and an increase in haemorrhagic bowel disease, where a pig can rapidly 'bleed out' from their bowels and die (Engdahl 2013). The Carman group strongly urged reproductive tests now be carried out to determine the effects of a GMO diet on animal reproduction.

The most persuasive criticism, however, is related to the claim that transgenic crops may guarantee the future of the world's food supply in the face of climate change and a growing population. While proponents suggest that GM technology promises to create an essential and sustainable way to feed the world and to provide food security, the opposition claims that in the long term, genetic modification actually reduces productivity. Genetic modification, they say, does not necessarily offer opportunities for underprivileged communities and nations; rather, it could significantly widen the gap between the rich and poor. GM seeds and animals that are food sources are subject to intellectual property rights owned by giant corporations, particularly Monsanto. These seeds are more expensive than ordinary seeds. Only a handful of large companies can afford the risk and expense of commercialising GMOs. Critics subsequently suggest that GM technology is a ploy by giant corporations, such as Monsanto, to peddle more herbicides, dominate the agricultural supply chain, and leave farmers dependent on high-priced transgenic seeds (Rotman 2013).

Every 30 min, an Indian farmer commits suicide as a result of Monsanto's GM crops monopoly, reported by the New York University School of Law Centre for Human Rights and Global Justice (Center for Human Rights and Global Justice 2011). Globalisation and monopoly have forced Indian farmers to buy Monsanto's Bt cotton seeds, and, since GM crops have become less pest resistant, the farmers have no choice but to purchase Monsanto's pesticides. Sometimes GM crops fail repeatedly. GM crops also do not grow back again the next year, and every year the farmers have to buy new costly seeds. As a result, many farmers fall into an endless cycle of debt, depression, hopelessness, and despair and decide to end their lives. The figures provided by the NY University School of Law showed that in 2009 alone, 17,638 farmers committed suicide (Center for Human Rights and Global Justice 2011). Accordingly, GM technology does the opposite of creating food security; it leads to the monopoly of multinational corporations, worldwide control of seeds, and a new type of economic slavery of disadvantaged people.



Moreover, it is not known how GM technologies will impact upon biodiversity and environmental balance. So far, the researchers identified several concerns related to ecological hazards such as the development of 'super weeds', negative effects on non-target species and insects that are harmless or even beneficial, pest resistance that can occur with frequent use of any pest control product, risks to other plants, the impact on genetic diversity, and even the possibility of eventually leading to monoculture (Makoni and Mohamed-Katerere 2006, pp. 312–314). A lack of biological diversity not only reduces natural habitats but may lead to higher risks of crop failure.

## 19.4 Islamic Approach Towards Food

In Islam, food is considered a source of divine beneficence and mercy. The Noble Qur'an and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (pbuh) stipulate a number of essential principles and angles concerning foodstuffs and their consumption.

Firstly, in Islam, dietary restrictions and food consumption are constitutive of religious observance and the formation of identity. In fact, Islamic jurisprudence distinguishes several fundamental values regarding the status of foodstuffs, such as lawful or permissible (*ḥalāl* or *mubāḥ*), forbidden (*ḥarām*), and doubtful matters (*al-shubhat*, *mashbah*, and *mashkak*). *Mubāḥ* may be defined as an act, object, or conduct over which the individual has freedom of choice and its exercise does not carry either reward or punishment (Kamali 2010, p. 595). The Qur'an declares that 'This day (all) good things are made lawful for you' (*al-Ma'idah* 5:5) and 'O Mankind! Eat from that which is lawful [*ḥalāl*] and good [*ṭayyib*] on the earth and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is an open enemy for you' (*al-Baqarah* 2:168).

Mohammad Hashim Kamali defined *ḥarām* as 'all that which the Lawgiver (*al-Shāri'*) has prohibited in definitive terms, and its perpetrator is liable to a punishment in this world or the Hereafter' (Kamali 2013, p. 14). In general, *ḥarām* may be an act, object, or conduct that is forbidden by clear evidence in the Qur'an or a *hadith*. Committing *ḥarām* is punishable, and omitting it is rewarded. Concerning foodstuff, the Qur'an identified ten types of prohibited food in the chapter of *Al-Ma'idah*, which are 'the dead animals, blood, the meat of pig, and that which is dedicated to others than Allah (i.e. on which Allah's name has not been mentioned while slaughtering), and that which has been killed by strangling, or beaten to death, or died after falling from a height, or killed by the goring of horns, and that which has been (partly) eaten by a wild animal, unless you are able to (Islamically) slaughter it (before its death), and that which is slaughtered at the place of idols' (*al-Ma'idah* 5:3). Alcoholic drinks have also been declared prohibited in another verse of the same chapter (*al-Ma'idah* 5:90). This is the sum total of clear prohibitions found in the Qur'an.

Besides, *ḥalāl* and *ḥarām* are not black and white categories. There is a grey area known as *al-shubhāt*, or doubtful matters that may occasionally call for fresh juristic enquiry and *ijtihād* as to their permissibility or otherwise (Kamali 2010, p. 595). Doubts may occur due to two factors, as Kamali asserts: either the source evidence of the *Sharī‘ah* is not free from doubt or else its application to a particular subject or case is uncertain (Kamali 2010, pp. 600–601). There is a *hadīth* of the Prophet (pbuh) regarding the doubtful matters where he said that ‘In between them [*ḥalāl* and *ḥarām*] there are the doubtful matters which are not known to most people whether they are *ḥalāl* or *ḥarām*. One who avoids them for the purity of one’s religion and honour would have saved oneself’.<sup>1</sup> To avoid doubt, and to make effort to stay clear of it, as Kamali suggests, is thus conducive to piety and one’s good name and reputation (Kamali 2010, p. 601).

Secondly, the prohibition of a certain food for consumption could be determined in Islam by the Lawgiver (*Shārī‘*) alone. It is ordained in the Qur’an that ‘O you who believe! Don’t make the good permissible things unlawful which Allah has made lawful for you, and don’t transgress. Indeed, Allah does not like the transgressors’ (*al-Ma‘idah* 5:87) and ‘Don’t label things lawful (*ḥalāl*) and unlawful (*ḥarām*) falsely with your tongues to invent lies against Allah. Indeed, those who invent lies against Allah will never be successful’ (*al-Nahl* 16:116). We may assume accordingly that in Islam, all types of foodstuffs are permissible for consumption in the absence of a clear prohibition mentioned in the Qur’an or *aḥadīth*. An Islamic legal maxim stipulates that ‘permissibility (*ibāḥa*) is the basic norm in all things unless there is evidence to establish a prohibition’ (Al-Suyuti 1983, p. 60).

Thirdly, the ultimate objectives of Islamic law (*maqasid al-sharī‘ah*) seek the psychological, spiritual, and physical well-being and benefit (*maṣlaḥah*) for all of mankind, and the criterion of *ḥalāl* and *ḥarām* contributes to the realisation of these objectives. The results of contemporary scientific research on foodstuffs, which are clearly prohibited in Islam, suggest that all which are certainly harmful and unsafe for the intellectual, mental, or physical well-being of people are considered *ḥarām* in Islam. Muslim jurists have identified four reasons for *ḥarām* in foodstuffs, which are manifest harm, intoxication, filth/natural repulsiveness, and encroachment on the rights of others (Kamali 2010, pp. 599–600). For example, carrion, spilt blood, and pig meat are considered impure (*najas* or *khābath*, pl. *khābā‘ith*); thus, due to the interest of well-being, cleanliness, and health of the society, these are prohibited by the clear text.<sup>2</sup>

The next Islamic principle on foodstuffs is related to the Qur’anic notion of *ṭayyib* (lit. pure, clean, wholesome). *Ṭayyib* is the opposite of *khābath* and commonly refers to acts, objects, and conduct which are considered good by people of sound nature, and they approve of it regardless of and independently of customary practices (Kamali 2013, p. 6; Al-Qaradawi 1994, p. 31). In fact, God did not

<sup>1</sup> Muslim, *Mukhtaṣar Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 253, *hadīth* no. 956.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Q. 6:145.

announce anything as *ḥalāl* without it being *ṭayyib*, or anything *ḥarām* which was not *khābath*. Yet, according to Kamali, *ṭayyib* is not a juridical category with a specific value in Islamic jurisprudence. Muslims are required to ensure that what they do, eat, or drink is permissible in Sharī'ah, even if it is not pure, *ṭayyib*, or best in quality. If someone chooses to be more particular and aim at what is *ṭayyib*, this is better of course. *Ṭayyib* in the selection of food, accordingly, is all about purity and natural appeal and thus belongs, as Kamali suggests, to the category of recommendable or *mandūb*, and not necessarily to that of *mubāḥ* (Kamali 2013, pp. 6–7). *Ṭayyib* in the Qur'anic usage appears as a moral category which should be practiced and sought, although it may or may not represent an obligation in and of itself. In the chapter of *al-Mu'minun*, for example, the Qur'an respects eating of wholesome food as a condition for being able to do good deeds: 'O you messengers! Eat from the lawful (*ṭayyib*) things and do good deeds. I am the All-Knower of what you do' (*al-Mu'minun* 23:51).

Food safety and the consumption of wholesome food are highly recommended in Islamic teachings to maintain spiritual, mental, and bodily well-being. By underlining the significance of physical and spiritual fitness, the Prophet (pbuh) stated that 'A strong believer is better than a weak believer'.<sup>3</sup> 'Only a healthy body can provide consistency for learning and practice', noted Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (1058–1111), and 'serenity of the body is not possible without food and nourishment...' (Moosa 2009, p. 136). A nutritious diet, in quality and quantity, is vital for sustaining a healthy body. The issue of food safety, therefore, comes under the Islamic responsibility of caring for the body, which is considered an *amānah* (trusteeship) of God. In a highly authentic *hadith*, the Prophet (pbuh) is quoted as saying: 'Your body has a right over you'.<sup>4</sup> This right requires every human being to feed the body when it is hungry, rest it when tired, clean it when it gets dirty, protect it against all harm, take precautions against subjecting it to illness, provide it with the necessary treatment when it suffers from disease, and not to overburden it in any way. All this represents, from the Islamic standpoint, a right which must not be overlooked or neglected in preference to other rights, including God's own rights over us (Al-Khayat 2004, pp. 11–12).

Lastly, Islamic teachings strongly advocate the preservation of the natural environment and showing respect for the sources and means of food. The protection of trees, agricultural land, and the sources of water are all vital components to a balanced Islamic environmental ethic. Man is entrusted with the authority to manage the natural world in accordance with the purposes intended by its Creator, which follows under the responsibility of human stewardship (*khilāfah*). Accordingly, the concept of food in Islam is associated with the ethics of dealing with the human body and mind, environment, and well-being of human society.

<sup>3</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, hadith no. 2664.

<sup>4</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī*, vol. 7, no. 127.

## 19.5 Islamic Rulings on GM Food

Ever since the introduction of GM products in food chains, several Muslim authorities had issued rulings and basic guidelines on the consumption of such types of food. Muslim religious authorities agreed on the prohibition of GM food derived from non-*ḥalāl* sources, such as pig genes. In the case of foodstuffs genetically modified from permissible (generally plants) genes, the absence of any types of harm, including in the long term, is a prerequisite for its lawfulness (*ḥalāl*).

The first and dominant ruling had been issued in 1998 by the Saudi-based Council for Islamic Jurisprudence (CIJ), affiliated to the World Muslim League, which articulated that ‘It is permissible to employ genetic engineering and its attendant products in the sphere of agriculture and animal husbandry. This is allowed on the condition that all necessary precautions be adopted in order to prevent any kind of harm – even on a long-term basis – to humans, animals, and the environment’ (Moosa 2009, p. 142). Following this *fatwā*, Muslim religious authorities in Indonesia, Singapore, and Malaysia approved the use of GMOs in food chains. In 2005, Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama in Lucknow, India, also issued the following *fatwā* approving GMOs: ‘To eat such fruit and vegetables is permissible. Unless the harm of a thing is known categorically or by means of a dominant probability, one cannot designate a permissible thing to be prohibited on a mere apprehension of harm. However, if out of precaution one refuses to partake of such foods, then that is the exercise of one’s choice’ (Moosa 2009, p. 145). The leading North American Islamic food certifying body, the Islamic Food and Nutrition Council of America (IFANCA), also affirms that there is a place for biotechnology in *ḥalāl* food production and it accordingly designates GM food ‘permissible’ by Islamic standards if GMOs are not from prohibited (*ḥarām*) sources. On another occasion, IFANCA stated that ‘Islam stresses the need to consume ‘pure’ foods’ (IFANCA 2003a, b).

Since the research on the potential hazards of GM food is still ongoing and no resolute scientific decision has been made on its merits, some Muslim religious scholars and scientists, especially in the West, have adopted a precautionary approach. Rustam Abdullin, an expert at the Halal Committee of the Spiritual Board of the Republic of Tatarstan, Russia, suggested that since the final conclusion on the safety of GM organisms has not yet been reached, it is safer to restrain ourselves from GM foodstuffs on the basis of the Islamic principle of choosing the lesser harm. Therefore, he stated, ‘due to our mandatory care for the consumers’ health and the status of *ḥalāl* products as a healthy and safe food, the Halal Committee requires from the manufacturers, who are willing to apply for the *ḥalāl* certificate, not to use GM ingredients in their products’ (Islam Today 2014). Accordingly, the Muslim religious authorities and scholars are undecided at this point of time on the permissibility of GMOs. Their final say depends on the findings of independent scientific and ethical studies on the safety of GM food in long-term consumption.

## 19.6 GM Food and Islamic Ethics

It has been suggested above that the concept of food in Islam is closely associated with the Islamic ethics and principles of *amānah*, *maṣlaḥah*, environmental care, human security, and the well-being and tranquillity of all mankind. What GM organisms present today are a whole series of challenges about which Muslim ethics is still ambivalent and undecided. Ebrahim Moosa, a leading scholar on Islamic thought, ethics, and religion from Duke University, indicated that:

In fact, the case of GMOs and food safety is not really about whether a food product is lawful or unlawful. Rather, the desirability of GM food products actually forces us to think about larger questions, such as what are desirable lifestyles and life forms? How do we utilise resources on earth? In other words, meaningful ethical discussions on GMOs ought to reflect fairly serious thinking about how individuals and communities envisage what they deem to be desirable lifestyles, practices, and truth claims. (Moosa 2009, pp. 152–153)

In order to deal with a range of contemporary ethical issues, Moosa recommended a constructive approach to ethics, one that indicates a particular way of understanding the relation between knowledge and what we experience as reality (Moosa 2009, p. 153; Smith 2006). According to him, in a range of issues in contemporary life – especially with respect to the industrial reshaping of life and the turn to science – we enter into a very different kind of discursive struggle that fits with what French philosopher and social theorist Michel Foucault (1990, pp. 138–144) termed *biopolitics*. The biopolitics of genetic engineering and the way it plays out in regard to food safety and GM organisms are not simply decisions taken about ‘facts’, but they centre on certain sets of values. Moosa (2009, p. 153) stated that powers no longer deal with modern human beings as legal subjects in our times, but seek to attain mastery over them. GMOs fall precisely within the flux of contemporary iterations of biopower, namely, *ecopower*.

Another considerable concern of Muslim scientists and intellectuals on the acceptance of GM organisms is related to environmental ethics. Mohammad Aslam Parvaiz (2003), a contemporary scholar on Islam and ecology, believed that the use of transgenes in food harbours potentially catastrophic consequences and environmental risks. His main worry was that genetic engineering manipulates microorganisms about which we know little. Parvaiz argued that transgenic organisms irreversibly interfere with the ‘most sacred of sacreds, that is, the gene pool of an organism’ (Moosa 2009, p. 147). Besides, according to him, such an invasive level of human interference in the ecosystem will produce unforeseen disturbances on the planet. He consequently urged not to alter God’s creation; otherwise, it will harm a delicate and balanced (*mīzān*) ecosphere (Moosa 2009, 147).

*Mīzān* is a term derived from the Qur’an that denotes the sense of the scale of justice and fair balance in existence. God has ordained supreme balance in the natural world, all parts of which are mutually connected and interdependent, as stated in the Qur’an: ‘Verily, all things We have created are in due measure and proportion’ (*al-Qamar* 54:49) and ‘He has raised the heaven high and He has set up the balance (in the worldly life). Do not transgress in (due) balance. And weigh correctly and do

not make a cheating balance' (*al-Rahman* 55:7–9). The internal composition of nutrients in all the produce of the earth is perfectly proportioned and safe. Man is entrusted by God to be a custodian and architect of the earth. At the same time, his relation to nature should be one of stewardship and not mastery. Although man is accorded the right to use natural resources, he is not permitted to abuse them with impunity. The preservation of this Created natural balance and *mīzān* is the chief principle of dealing with the environment in Islam. To borrow Kamali's expression:

When the natural purity of the Earth's produce is incessantly eroded by chemical infusions for commercial gain, and when dense carbon emissions, traffic and industrial pollution poison the air that inflicts harm on humans and other life forms, its God-ordained balance is disrupted. When the cattle and grass eating animals are fed with animally-sourced protein until it is manifested in such problems as 'mad-cow disease' etc., and when genetically modified fruits overtake the natural variety for commercial gain, the God-ordained balance in them is no longer immune – this is nothing less, in al-Qaradawi's view, than transgression and mischief, *ẓulm* and *fasād*.<sup>5</sup> (Kamali 2012, pp. 270–271)

Thus, there are a number of scientists and specialists who advise not hastening to accept GM plants. However, the main problem is that voices of Muslims – who are specialists in the field – are seldom heard in the ethical debates, while often the official religious authorities have the final say without broad consultation with experts and communities.

## 19.7 Conclusion and Recommendations

After a brief evaluation of GM crops from the religious- and ethical-based perspectives through emphasis on its probable impacts on individuals, the environment, economic and social well-being, and safety, this writer derives the following conclusions and recommendations.

Firstly, it is true that Islam strongly encourages scientific and technological discoveries to improve the quality of human life. Yet, the preservation of the God-created environmental balance (*mīzān*) is the fundamental principle of dealing with nature in Islam. GM organisms require an invasive level of human interference in the ecosystem that may produce catastrophic results for environmental balance as well as the well-being of all mankind and other living organisms. In the long term, genetic modification seems to bring more damage and mischief than improving the quality of human life. The most common argument of the advocates of GM food – that GM technology is just a minor extension of traditional breeding methods – is therefore questionable. Recent revolutionary innovations in genetic engineering and the decoding of the human genome today make it possible for vegetables or fruits in the food chain to bear bacterium or animal transgenes. Such radical genetic

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<sup>5</sup> See also Yusuf al-Qaradawi (2001), p. 225.

alterations cannot be confused with the selective breeding techniques practiced by the farmers to improve crop plants and animals safely since prehistoric times.

Secondly, the issue of GM food is extremely complex and requires a multifaceted and wide-ranging approach to decide on its status from the Islamic and ethical perspectives. There are only a handful of studies in the peer-reviewed literature addressing the safety of GM products. The safety of food derived from GM crops or animals in their long-term consumption has yet to be scientifically proven. The results of the preliminary independent studies on the safety of GM foods convince one not to hasten to adopt this technology extensively until its safety in long-term consumption for humans, nature, and other living forms is proven by balanced and peer-reviewed studies.

Thirdly, the Muslim religious authorities at this point in time are undecided on GMOs. Generally, permissibility (*ibāḥa*) is the basic norm in all foodstuffs in Islam unless there is clear evidence in the text to establish a prohibition. Thus, GM food falls under the Islamic category of *ibāḥa* until its harm is firmly established. The final say of Muslim religious authorities and scholars depends on the findings of independent scientific and ethical studies on the potential hazards of GM food in long-term consumption. Yet, since no resolute scientific decision has been made, some Muslim religious scholars and scientists, especially in the West, adopt a precautionary approach towards the acceptance of GM plants in mass production.

Finally, the issue of transparency is addressed. Today many people, virtually the entire population, could be exposed to genetically engineered foods without their knowledge and consent. Consumers unknowingly buy them since foodstuffs containing GM ingredients may not be immediately apparent as it is rarely stated on the label. This article suggests that consumers wary of potential harm from GM organisms have a right to be informed; therefore, labelling of GM food is essential. Once again, in the cases of the use of genes derived from prohibited substances (pig genes) in Islam, manufacturers are required to inform consumers when such substances and transgenes are used in foods and medicines.

The article consequently proposes the following policy recommendations:

- Sound peer-reviewed and balanced studies on the safety of GM crops are urgently required. Since the potential risks from GM organisms are associated with safety and health issues, as well as environmental, political, and economic concerns, a bridge between various specialists from different backgrounds is essential in reaching at a resolute decision. The ways to create sustainable funds to support such studies should also be assessed in order to achieve reliable unbiased results.
- GM food regulations should not be restricted to a framework of science-based decision making alone. Religious and ethical views on genetic engineering should also be valued. Islamic jurisprudence has to contribute to the development of bioethics. This article recommends creation of an Islamic Ethics Committee to monitor religious and ethical aspects of current bioscience developments. Also, the God-created environmental balance (*mīzān*) should be preserved for the welfare of future generations.

- Since ensuring the well-being and safety of citizens is one of the fundamental objectives of governance in Islam, the authorities should give more attention to the quality of food used in mass consumption. Governments should not hasten to adopt GM food in mass production until its safety in regard to long-term consumption for human beings, the environment, and ecosystem is proven satisfactorily by balanced and peer-reviewed studies.
- This article recommends introducing mandatory labelling of foods containing GM ingredients. The buyers have God-given and civilian rights to know the quality and characteristics of the commodities at purchase. Any types of economic profits at the expense of the health and safety of the masses should be prohibited. The political and religious authorities must ensure all measures to create economic and social justice, to achieve the well-being and safety of the entire population, and to protect the God-ordained environmental balance.

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## Chapter 20

# Advances in Tri-parent Baby Technology: The Bioethical Challenge for Muslims

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and Shaikh Mohd Saifuddeen

**Abstract** Preservation of progeny or lineage is one of the elements of *maqasid al-shari'ah* (higher objectives of Islamic law). Islam is very particular in matters pertaining to the health of newborns. Consequently, issues concerning female fertility and newborn defects caused by genetic diseases are discussed by Muslim scholars. These two health issues are caused by various factors including defects in reproductive organs and genetic problems inherited from the maternal or paternal side or even caused by mutations such as defective mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA). Assisted reproductive technology (ART) is a medical treatment developed to overcome fertility problems. Recently, this field developed an ART-based defective mitochondrial treatment therapy known as tri-parent baby technology (TPBT). The technology currently being studied involves two types of in vitro fertilisation (IVF) technique: pronuclear transfer (PNT) and maternal spindle transfer (MST). This TPBT could be of great benefit to mankind, including Muslims. However, for Muslims, this technology raises various issues including questions of ethics, morality and parental status. This article presents a brief background of the TPBT as well as challenges for Muslims arising from it. Initial feedback from an Islamic jurisprudential viewpoint is provided by highlighting and analysing scientists' and current Islamic scholars' research and insights on this issue.

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## 20.1 Introduction

The preservation of progeny or lineage is one of the primary elements of *maqasid al-shari'ah* (higher objectives of Islamic law). Thus, Islam is very particular in matters pertaining to female fertility and newborn defects caused by various genetic-related diseases that haunt married couples. These two health issues are caused by various factors including defects of the reproductive organs and genetic problems inherited from either the maternal or paternal side or even defects caused by mutations in mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA). These kinds of defects are perhaps the most challenging to diagnose and manage (Thorburn 2004). This problem is caused by either: (1) DNA mutations in the mitochondria or (2) DNA mutations in the nucleus genes (Nuffield Council 2012, p. 21). The complexity of the disease causes medical practitioners difficulties in terms of disease identification, what diagnostic protocols and criteria to use and how best to manage the patients and their families (Thorburn 2004). Mutations in the mtDNA present huge implications to the individuals concerned because mitochondria are found in all human cells (Dimauro and Davidzon 2005) and are the principal generators of cellular ATP (adenosine triphosphate) (Taylor and Turnbull 2005). Individuals suffering defective mtDNA diseases will experience various critical illnesses, for example, heart failure, cardiomyopathy, optical atrophy, epilepsy, anaemia and renal tubular defects, and it may prove to be fatal (Taylor and Turnbull 2005). As of today, there is no cure for mtDNA defects (Nuffield Council 2012, p. vii).

## 20.2 Mitochondria and Mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA)

Mitochondria are organelles that exist in nearly every cell of the human body and are dynamic in terms of form and size. They have different morphologies according to the cells inhabited and due to fusion and fission activities.<sup>1</sup> Mitochondria contain two membranes; the outer membrane fully surrounds the inner membrane, with a small intermembrane space in between.<sup>2</sup> There are highly convoluted structures in the inner membrane, creating infoldings called cristae (Davidson 2004). The inner membrane that surrounds the mitochondrial matrix is also loaded with proteins involved in electron transport and adenosine triphosphate (ATP) synthesis (Nature 2013). Mitochondria generate roughly 65 kg of ATP per day (Lane 2006).

Mitochondria have their own double-helix deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) that displays itself in a circular form known as mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA; Davidson 2004). Mitochondria are genetically regulated by both the nucleus of DNA and

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<sup>1</sup>Fusion activity involves the merging of two mitochondria organelles, forming a bigger organelle. See Detmer and Chan (2007).

<sup>2</sup>The outer membrane has many protein-based pores that are big enough to allow the passage of ions and molecules as large as a small protein. In contrast, the inner membrane has much more restricted permeability unlike the outer membrane. See Nature (2013).

mtDNA. Mitochondria and mtDNA genomes, which are 16.6 kilo base pairs long (Chiaratti et al. 2011), contain 37 genes that consist of 13 polypeptides. The most important genes in the generation of ATP in mitochondria are the oxidative phosphorylation (OXPHOS) system, two ribosomal RNA (rRNA) and 22 transfer RNA (tRNA) genes that are needed by mitochondria in the transcription process. Genetics in mtDNA is different from Mendelian genetics which is the reason why mtDNA mutation occurs (Taylor and Turnbull 2005). Mitochondria genes are 10–20 times more likely to mutate due to (1) being exposed to free radicals during the energy generation process compared to nucleus genes that are shrouded in a protein cover (Lane 2006) and (2) the lack of histones in mtDNA and its limited healing mechanism (Tachibana et al. 2009). Three main principles of mtDNA genetics (Dimauro and Davidzon 2005) that need to be identified in understanding symptoms of mtDNA defects are: (1) heteroplasmy and threshold effect,<sup>3</sup> (2) mitotic segregation,<sup>4</sup> and (3) maternal inheritance.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>mtDNA molecules in a tissue that possess the same genotype are known as homoplasmy, while the existence of two or more mitochondrial genotypes is known as heteroplasmy. mtDNA mutations usually involve some part of the mtDNA of a tissue, organ, or individuals. Damage or mitochondrial disease will not happen if the number of mutant mtDNA did not reach the threshold or minimum level which varies depending on the affected tissue or organ. There are differences between homoplasmy and heteroplasmy mutant mtDNA heredity. In the case of impaired vision, for example, around fifty percent (50 %) of male babies with homoplasmic mtDNA mutations will experience the disease compared to only ten percent (10 %) in females, showing that nuclear genetic factors play a significant role in the expression of symptoms of defective mtDNA disease and are not solely subject to mtDNA factors. Heredity of diseases caused by heteroplasmy mutant mtDNA is more complex and difficult to be identified. See Tachibana et al. (2009). See also Taylor and Turnbull (2005).

<sup>4</sup>The number of mutant mtDNA in a child's cells may change during the cell division phase and, in turn, change the phenotype; this is known as mitotic segregation. This rate change happens as early as the ovum stage and the fission during the embryogenesis stage. After conception, fission of the mitochondria (all of them originating from the ovum) will not happen until the 64-cell stage. During this stage, only three cells will develop into a foetus while the rest will go into the trophoblast. This mitotic segregation is what causes the patient of mtDNA symptoms to experience clinical changes growing up. See Poulton and Bindoff (2005) and also Dimauro and Davidzon (2005).

<sup>5</sup>Mitochondria are maternally inherited and all mtDNAs are sourced from the ovum during conception. Sperms contain mitochondria which are used to produce energy for their movements. However, the paternal mitochondria decompose after conception during the formation of male pronuclei in the fertilised egg. Thus, a woman carrying mutant mtDNA will pass it to her children (sons and daughters), but only the daughters will continue to pass the mutant mtDNA to their children. The symptoms of defective mtDNA disease will be expressed by both genders; although mutant mtDNA is inherited by all children, only in certain cases does it turn into a disease. See Nuffield Council on Bioethics (2012), p. 19.

## 20.3 Tri-parent Baby Technology

Research based on assisted reproductive technology (ART) is actively conducted seeking a cure to defective mtDNA symptoms. The recent development in this field is the therapeutic treatment for symptoms of ART-based mitochondria defects, known as mitochondrial replacement therapies or tri-parent baby technology (TPBT). This technology uses DNAs from three adult individuals (one male and two females) aiming to prevent a mother suffering from mtDNA defects from passing it on to her children (Cheng 2013; Smith-Spark 2013). The therapy utilises specific IVF techniques through the replacement of mitochondria or mtDNA in the ovum of a woman suffering from mitochondrial defects with mitochondria from a healthy, normal woman's ovum. This therapy is known as TPBT because it involves three sources of genetic materials – from a man (through his sperm) and two women (the man's spouse and another woman who is the third party). This is in contrast to a normal baby that acquires genetic resources from only two persons, namely, his/her mother and father.

### 20.3.1 A Brief History of Development

The quest to discover the best treatment to overcome symptoms of defective mtDNA-related diseases began ever since the symptoms were first identified 40 years ago, while mutant mtDNA in humans was discovered in 1988 (Holt et al. 1988). In 2003, a team of researchers from Sun Yat-Sen University, Guangzhou, China, experimented on a human embryo using the pronuclear transfer (PNT) technique. Five reconstructed embryos were transferred into the uterus of a woman who then became pregnant with triplets. The team then managed to reduce the triplets into a twin pregnancy. However, the woman experienced a miscarriage, losing both foetuses a few months later (Nuffield Council 2012).

In 2005, the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA), United Kingdom, licensed a group of researchers at the Newcastle Fertility Centre, Newcastle University, to conduct research on mitochondrial replacement therapy.<sup>6</sup> In 2008, the group succeeded in performing a DNA pronuclear transfer (PNT) procedure on one-day-old human zygotes (House of Lords 2008). Amendments to the *HFEA 1990 Act* were also approved in the United Kingdom parliament in the same year authorising medical treatments using the mtDNA replacement procedure aiming to hinder severe symptoms of serious mtDNA diseases (Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority 2014a, p. 10). In 2009, a group of researchers in Oregon, United States, succeeded in performing the maternal spindle transfer (MST) procedure on *Macaca mulatta* monkeys, showing that reconstructed primate eggs are

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<sup>6</sup>Licence has been given under the *Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 1990*. See Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (2005).

capable of performing normal conceptions and can continue with the normal process of embryonic development (Tachibana et al. 2009).

The years 2011 to 2013 saw the United Kingdom government ordering the HFEA to carry out a scientific review through obtaining expert opinions, public dialogues and consultation sessions to determine the safety and effectiveness of the TPBT (Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority 2014a, pp. 6–8). On February 27, 2014, the UK health authority conducted a consultation session in preparation for drafting regulations on the implementation of TPBT, which ended on May 21, 2014 (Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority 2014a, p. 10). In July 2014, the United Kingdom announced its intention to table a bill in parliament relating to the implementation of TPBT (Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority 2014b).

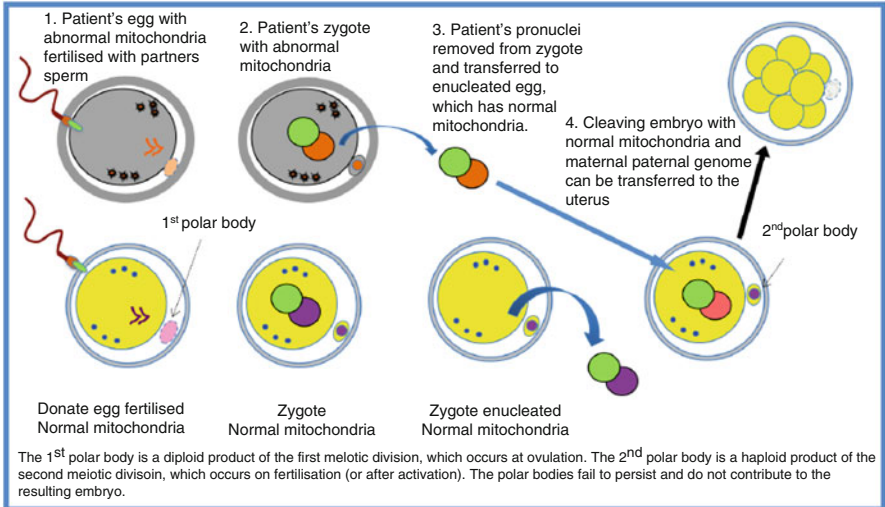
### **20.3.2 IVF Techniques Involved**

#### **20.3.2.1 Pronuclear Transfer (PNT)**

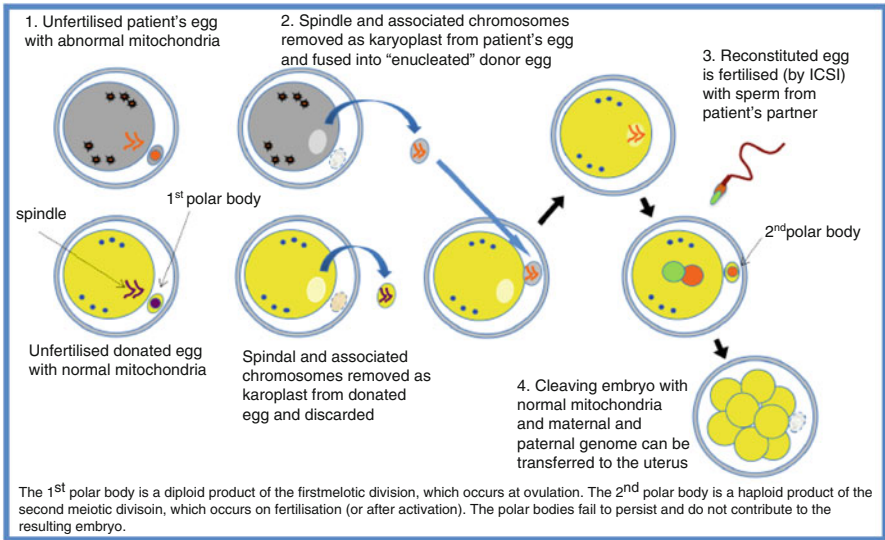
This micro-manipulation technique uses an oocyte that has been fertilised with sperm via in vitro, which has developed into a zygote and which has almost entered the first embryonic cell division. At this stage, the zygote is a single cell and has not yet divided. Pronuclei from the zygote of a woman with problematic mtDNA are removed. Next, pronuclei from a healthy woman's zygote are removed, making it an enucleated zygote. Pronuclei from the parent's zygote is then inserted and grafted into the enucleated zygote. The reconstructed zygote – that now contains pronuclei from the mother and healthy mitochondria from the donor's egg – is then inserted into the mother's uterus for further development (Nuffield Council 2012, p. 16).

#### **20.3.2.2 Maternal Spindle Transfer (MST)**

The MST technique uses a matured oocyte in the meiosis metaphase II stage. Spindles of chromosomes were removed during this phase from the problematic oocyte (from the mother). Spindles of chromosomes from another healthy oocyte (sourced from a mitochondria donor) are removed, resulting in an enucleated oocyte. Spindles of chromosomes are then placed into the enucleated donor eggs. The reconstructed eggs are then fertilised using intracytoplasmic sperm injection with sperm from the spouse of the patient/woman having symptoms of mtDNA defect problems. The reconstructed embryo will then be placed in the mother's uterus for further development (Nuffield Council 2012) (Figs. 20.1 and 20.2).



**Fig. 20.1** Pronuclear transfer (*PNT*) (From Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority 2014a, p. 16)



**Fig. 20.2** Maternal spindle transfer (*MST*) (From Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority 2014a, p. 15)

## 20.4 Issues Stemming from Tri-parent Baby Technology

Tri-parent baby technology engenders controversy and often heated debate among scientists, researchers and civil society (Check 2005, p. 12). Among the key issues arising from this technology is the safety of the IVF techniques used, including germ line modification, because the alteration done will be inherited by future generations. The respective IVF techniques are relatively new and are still under research. Furthermore, scientists' knowledge and understanding on mitochondria is still limited (Nuffield Council 2012, pp. 52, 65, 70). Risks from this technology might not be directly expressed by the patients undergoing the therapy but experienced by future generations. Several of this technology's side effects may not be manifested for several years. As with other ART technologies, preclinical testing is essential in ensuring a level of compatibility and safety of the TPBT for humans. Mitochondrial replacement therapy should only be utilised to prevent serious mitochondrial diseases. Patients and oocyte donors should be carefully chosen, and written consent should be obtained before preclinical testing is conducted. Babies born from this technology need to be monitored to examine any effects on the newborn person and his/her descendants (Amato et al. 2014, pp. 31, 35).

The personal identity of the baby resulting from the technology is also an issue. The pro-technology group is of the opinion that the technology does not affect the identity of the baby (Nuffield Council 2012, pp. 52, 57). Meanwhile, opponents of the technique argue that identity is not in the genes but in the world in which we live and the stories we construct and are able to maintain. A person's identity including her traits, desires, beliefs, values, emotions, intentions, memories, actions and experiences is informed by her personal relationships characterised by varying degrees and kinds of intimacy and interdependence (Baylis 2013). Thus, in this context, the statement that TPBT does not affect the identity of the babies involved (Nuffield Council 2012, p. 53) is inaccurate. The life and experiences of babies born with inherited mtDNA defects and those born healthy as a result of TPBT will undoubtedly be different; this aspect, in turn, moulds the identity and personality of the baby until they are adults. Although mtDNA is composed of only 13 genes – about 0.05 % from the total number of human genes – it is these genes that determine whether a baby will suffer from mitochondrial-related diseases or otherwise. The presence of such small genetic material from a third source (mtDNA from oocyte donor) causes changes in the genetics and identity of a baby. Tri-parent baby technology's IVF techniques require mtDNA from a woman who is not from the patient's maternal lineage, i.e. her mother, grandmother, sisters, etc., because the patient's maternal relatives also carry the same mutant mtDNA. Thus, the 'tri-parent' term reflects the presence of genetic materials from an unrelated third source that is not closely related to the parents of the baby (Baylis 2013).



## 20.5 Considerations for Tri-parent Baby Technology from Islamic Perspective

Islam is a religion that respects and celebrates human nature. Therefore, Islam permits and enjoins mankind to marry while forbidding adultery. Aside from meeting human's basic biological and emotional needs, marriage is also the key to preserving human lineage and progeny because every newborn child must relate unequivocally to a biological and legal father and mother (Nordin 2012; Serour 2008). To this, Allah says:

And among His Signs is this, that He created for you mates from among yourselves, that ye may dwell in tranquility with them, and He has put love and mercy between your (hearts); verily in that are Signs for those who reflect. (Qur'an *al-Rum* 30:21)

The preservation of lineage and progeny is one of the essential objectives of the Islamic law under the general principles, known as *maqasid al-sharī'ah* (Saifuddeen et al. 2013). *Maqasid al-sharī'ah* serves to protect five elements that are of significant interest to Muslims, namely: (1) protection of the faith (*ḥifẓ al-dīn*), (2) protection of life (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*), (3) protection of intellect (*ḥifẓ al-'aql*), (4) protection of offspring (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*) or protection of progeny (*ḥifẓ al-nasab*) and (5) protection of property (*ḥifẓ al-māl*) (Laludin and Ali 2006).

In general, Islam permits the use of ART in aiming to protect children (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*) as long as the technique does not violate the protection of lineage (*ḥifẓ al-nasab*),<sup>7</sup> is not life threatening and does not contradict the ethical and moral values of a society (Yeprem 2007). In the context of TPBT, the protection of lineage and progeny is very significant because the technology, either PNT or MST, involves the presence of a third source of genetic material (enucleated oocytes from the donor). However, only mitochondria are utilised from the third source, and it does not involve the nucleus of a cell, the entity that carries the complete genetic material of a person. Although the procedure solely involves mitochondria, the main concern is that they are inherited maternally, meaning that all mitochondria existing in a person come from egg cells. In addition, although the size of mtDNA is very small, it is the sole determinant of whether or not an individual will experience symptoms of defective mtDNA disease. The question is: does Islam allow such technology? If yes, there may be uncertainty in the baby's lineage because of the existence of genetic material that does not originate from the baby's parents.

Intervention in progeny and lineage does not only involve the question of the baby's identity, but gives rise to its greater impact on the general public. Unlike Western society, in Islam, a person's identity is also closely linked to his/her social relationship with fellow Muslims. Intervention of progeny and lineage affects marital, custodianship and inheritance matters such as child custody, *'awrah*, and

<sup>7</sup>Islam is very strict in matters pertaining to the protection of progeny. This is evident through the provision of *'iddah* for women who are divorced or widowed. Among the main factors for why *'iddah* is established is to prevent the occurrence of mixed paternity between the former and the new husband. See Syh Noorul Madihah Syed Husin and Raihanah Azahari (2010).

interaction between *mahram* and *non-mahram*. The underlying reason why protection of the progeny is given emphasis by Islam is because it is indirectly related to a key element of *maqasid al-shari'ah* namely the protection of religion (*hifz al-din*). If these issues are not carefully resolved, chaos and turmoil could occur in the Islamic family and community. Thus, Islam prescribes that ART needs to involve a legally married couple and be free from interference from a third party (Saifuddeen et al. 2013).

On the other hand, Islam also emphasises preservation of life (*hifz al-nafs*) and the attempt at finding cures for diseases. Until now, the remedy which can cure the symptoms of defective mtDNA diseases has yet to be found. Medical experts are confident that the TPBT is able to prevent or hinder the transfer of mutant mtDNA from a mother to her children. Diseases caused by mtDNA mutations are serious illnesses that require substantial expense, energy and time to treat. Families who have these symptoms also experience mental and emotional stress taking care of their sick family member(s). Mothers diagnosed with this kind of disease will be depressed and stressed if their children die prematurely or during infancy. Thus, mitochondrial replacement therapy can be viewed as an attempt at curing disease and preserving life.

In determining the status of this technology, a few important issues need to be studied in depth. Firstly, as with other medical diagnoses, those made on the symptoms of defective mtDNA diseases do not normally reach the absolute level of confidence (*al-yaqin*) and are only based on a few probabilities. Physicians experience difficulties in determining the exact level and probability that a person will experience symptoms of defective mitochondrial problems due to the complexity of the disease. A person carrying mutant mtDNA does not necessarily experience symptoms of mtDNA defects unless the mutant mtDNA exceeds a threshold value, based on the respective tissue or organ involved. Secondly, research should be undertaken to assess the benefits and harms posed by the technology to the individuals involved and society as a whole, whether it brings more benefits or drawbacks, based on the *fiqh* maxim: 'Aversion of harm takes precedence over acquisition of benefits' (*daf'u al-mafasid awla min jalb al-masalih*). If the technology is proven harmful, consideration should be given whether it poses greater harm to individuals or the public, based on the *fiqh* maxim: 'Private harm could be inflicted in order to prevent a public harm' (*yatahammalu al-darar al-khas li daf'i al-darar al-'am*). Thirdly, Islam has outlined *maqasid al-shari'ah* as the general guideline in justifying or rejecting an issue. Tri-parent baby technology involves three main elements of *maqasid al-shari'ah*, namely, the issue of the preservation of religion, preservation of children and lineage and preservation of life. Thus, careful consideration and research should be undertaken to determine which is more important: the preservation of children and lineage, preservation of life or preservation of religion. Thus, a thorough, detailed and careful study needs to be conducted to determine whether PNT, MST or TPBT in general is permissible or prohibited by Islam.

## 20.6 Conclusion

Islam is a religion that combines both fixed and flexible elements (*thabāt wa murūnah*). Islam accepts and permits advances brought by S&T as long as their progress does not violate the tenets of Islam while benefitting mankind in general and Muslims in particular (Yeprem 2007). Progress in S&T, for example, ART and TPBT, must not violate the five primary objectives of *maqasid al-sharī'ah* so that mankind can live peacefully without chaos and turmoil arising. Thus, Islamic views and laws regarding the TPBT need to be examined in detail and carefully using the appropriate *Sharī'ah* and *fiqh* aspects in order to determine whether the technology is permissible or not.

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**Part VI**  
**Islamic Teaching of Science**

# Chapter 21

## Integrating the Qur'anic Worldview with the Natural Sciences: Answering the Call for Islamic Secondary Schools

Nor Jannah Hassan

**Abstract** The question of integration in the education of the *ummah* has been a top agenda among Islamic intellectuals and activists since the immediate postcolonial period, where secular humanism and atheistic modernism left Muslims with the legacy of a dichotomous education. Many contemporary Islamic educational institutions in the Muslim world have been established since then, each with their somewhat distinctive modes of integration. How much have the Muslims progressed towards true integration of the Qur'anic Worldview in the curricula of the natural sciences in secondary Islamic education, whose students are at critical stages of their cognitive, affective, spiritual, social, and ethical developments? This article presents a qualitative report on findings from field research that analysed a few samples of integration models at a number of Islamic secondary schools in Malaysia and Indonesia, in relation to the ideal that integration constitutes a full merger or an organic fusion between knowledge that is revealed and that which is acquired through reason.

In an effort to understand Western modern science, this article briefly assesses the worldviews that have brought about the natural sciences to its current stage. It proposes a model for Islamic secondary education where the natural sciences undergo a discreet but holistic reconstruction, reinterpretation, and redirection from the framework of, and organically infused with the Qur'anic Worldview, whilst enriching 'Islamic studies' with a good grounding in and appreciation of the natural sciences.

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## 21.1 Introduction

The theocentric<sup>1</sup> worldview of the Qur'an is one that bears witness to *al-Tawhīd*, the uncompromising monotheism of Islam. Being in complete submission and subservience to Allah—The One and Only True God, The Lord, The Creator, and The Sustainer of the entire universe – its very premise is espoused by the *kalimah shahādah*: I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. As the final Divine Revelation, the worldview that the Qur'an prescribes is holistic and comprehensive (*shumūliyyah*), integrative (*takāmuliyyah*), and well balanced (*tawāzinah*). Indeed, the message of Islam since Adam (on whom be peace) has always been as such, customised to the distinct civilisational circumstances of each time period. Different efforts at integration actually constitute the reformation, renewal, and revival (*iṣlāh*, *tajdīd*, and *ihyā'*) of the *ummah* in reasserting and re-establishing the above nature of the *Tawhidic* message of Islam, which, in different periods in human history, had been sidelined, forgotten, or overlooked. There have been many notable reformers and activists in the history of the *ummah*. Contemporary efforts at (re)integration in general are a reaction against the dichotomy brought about by colonialism and the ideas brought forth by globalisation of the modernists' and post-postmodernists' worldviews and tendencies. This article discusses four main rationales that justify the need for integrating the natural sciences with the worldview of the Qur'an, touching upon its ideals and the ground realities before focusing on the actual situation in secondary schools. It briefly describes the findings from field research and surveys conducted between December 2010 and January 2013 and presents a model of integration for Islamic secondary schools.

## 21.2 The Rationale

There are several rationales that call for integrating the Qur'anic Worldview with the natural sciences. The following four main reasons are discussed below.

### 21.2.1 Qur'anic Injunction

The Qur'an draws attention to 'read' the revealed 'signs' in the two Books of God Almighty, namely, the (1) *Āyāt Allāh fī'l-Qur'ān*, the revelation in human language, i.e. the written text of the Qur'an, and (2) *Āyāt Allāh fī'l-kawn*, the Open Book of Nature, the revelations teeming with a universal language of truth dictated by

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<sup>1</sup>Theocentric here is used in the context of the Qur'anic Worldview being *Tawhidic*.

Allah's laws of nature, or *Taqdīr Allāh al-kawnī*,<sup>2</sup> His signs in the natural world abounding in the universe and within humankind. These are to be 'read', studied, contemplated upon, and understood in light of the Qur'anic Revelation, thus signifying the rightful position of reason, which is subservient to Revelation. God says in the Qur'an:

*Read (Iqra')! In the Name of thy Lord Who created. [...] Read! And thy Lord is Most Bountiful. He Who taught (the use of) the pen. Taught man which he knew not [...] bow down in adoration, and bring thyself closer (to Allāh)! (al-'Alaq 96:1–19)*

*[...] Soon will We show them Our Signs in the (furthest) regions, and in their own souls, until it becomes manifest to them that this is the Truth. (Fuṣṣilat 41:53)*

*To Allāh belongeth the Dominion of the Heavens and the Earth; and Allāh hath Power over all things. Behold! In the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of night and day – there are indeed Signs for the Ūlī al-Albāb. (Āl 'Imrān 3:189–190)*

Time and again the Qur'an commands one to apply all the sensory and intellectual faculties in exerting oneself at comprehending both categories of *Āyāt* with humility, gratitude, acknowledgement, awe and utmost reverence, obedience, and servitude towards God Almighty. Another compelling example is *al-Rum* 30:11–27, where God decrees upon humanity to awaken the senses and engage in a rational understanding of His *Āyāt*, as do the '*Ūlū al-Albāb*'.<sup>3</sup>

The necessity for integrating the rational sciences with revelation has been expressed by many Muslims, notably Imam al-Ghazzali (1058–1111 CE), the epitome of a fully integrated scholar and the reformer of the fifth century Hijrah, who reconciled the three disparate post-Qur'anic thoughts of *kalām*, *fiqh*, and *taṣawwuf* into one cohesive whole. Through classifying knowledge and its acquisition, al-Ghazzali reinstated the rightful position of human intellect with respect to the superiority of Revelation. In *Wonders of the Heart* (from *al-Muhlikāt* of *Ḥiyā' Ūlūm al-Dīn*), he wrote:

So he who is a proponent of mere blind imitation [or pure reliance] and of setting the intellect entirely aside is ignorant; and he who is satisfied with the intellect alone, without the light of the Qur'an and the Sunnah, is deluded. Take care that thou be not in either of these two groups, but be one who unites the two sources. [...] The supposition of those who think that the intellectual sciences are opposed to the sciences of religion and that it is impossible to bring them together in harmony [i.e. the reconciliation of them is impossible], is a supposition which arises from the blindness in the eye of insight. [...] This is only because his own impotence has caused him to imagine an inconsistency in our religion! (Al-Ghazali 2009, pp. 55–56)

<sup>2</sup>*Taqdīr Allāh al-Kawnī* is used to refer to what is conventionally denoted as *Sunnah Allah* (or *Sunan Allah* in plural) *al-Kawniyyah*, for God's Law in Nature. *Taqdīr* is the Qur'anic terminology for the determination, pre-measurement, or preordainment of God Almighty in the universe, the world of nature and human lives (see '*faqaddarahu taqdīrā*' in Q. 25:2). Whilst the Qur'an uses '*taqdīr*' more in the context of the universe and the world of nature, the term '*sunnah*' is specifically used in the context of peoples' behaviour (see Q. 33:38).

<sup>3</sup>The article provides special focus throughout on the *Ūlū al-Albāb*.



The Turkish scholar and author of the much celebrated *Risale-i-Nur*, Bediuzzaman Sa'îd Nursî (1877–1963), who witnessed the painful demise of the Ottoman caliphate and the establishment of the secular Turkish republic, gave a beautiful analogy:

The religious sciences are the light of the conscience, and the modern sciences are the light of the reason. The truth becomes manifest through the combining of the two. The students' endeavour will take flight on these two wings. When they are separated it gives rise to bigotry in the one, and wiles and scepticism in the other. (Sa'îd Nursî, *Münâzarat*, quoted in Vahide 2011, p. 53)

In *Qur'anic Foundation and Structure of Muslim Society*, Fazl-ul-Rahman Ansari, the founder of the World Federation of Islamic Mission who spent his life propagating Islam worldwide, elucidated that:

[...] the Holy Qur'an chartered a new course for the pursuers of science; and in that its function was to stimulate the scientific outlook and the quest for scientific knowledge, and to promote the cultivation of the physical sciences;—and that to an extent that the Scientific Quest has been made a part of the Worship of God, having been affirmed as an inseparable complimentary of the Religious Quest [...]. (Ansari 2008, p. 180)

Isma'il Raji Al-Faruqî's (1921–1986) message on Tawhîd has been articulated distinctively throughout his work (see for example Al Faruqî 1982). In the fully illustrated book *The Cultural Atlas of Islam*, he stressed:

Islam called everyone to be a scientist investigating every field and aspect of nature; a historian examining every chapter of human and group behaviour through the centuries. (al Faruqî and al Faruqî 1986, p. 321)

He continued that nature 'was not created in vain or sport', but with a 'divine purpose', not for man 'to possess or to destroy', but as a '*ni'mah*' and '*āyāh*'. It is 'God's work', an 'instrument of His purpose'; thus, it demands 'tremendous dignity' and 'respect and awe' (ibid., pp. 321–323).

### 21.2.2 *The Reality*

Unlike the conventional Western mindset, which (due to centuries' long conflicts between the church and science) sees religion and reason to be disparately at variance with each other, the Qur'anic holistic and integrative outlook has been frequently expressed by numerous classical and contemporary scholars and writers of the Muslim world. Therefore it is common to come across Muslims who are confounded when the question of integration of (Western) modern science with the Qur'an is discussed. Questions and statements like (i) 'What is the problem with [modern] science?', 'What is so "un-Islamic" about [modern] science?', 'There is no such a thing as Islamic science or un-Islamic science!'; or (ii) 'Science is science, it is objective and it is already "Islamic"?', 'Don't tell me that what we are doing in science is not Islamic!' are usually thrown out in response. These are actual comments; the first set are some of the arguments or irate questions posed by the veteran headmaster of a very well-established Islamic school in Selangor during the

author's interview with him in July 2012. The second was given in November 2012 by a humble practicing Muslim applied scientist in Kuala Lumpur. Though lacking in statistics, these comments summarise astutely the mindset and ignorance of an observable many,<sup>4</sup> regardless of whether they are from the lay general public or students, educators, and practitioners of science. The present author submits that this mindset results from (i) the formal education and training that 'indoctrinates' the objectivity of science and (ii) the lack of exposure to and a good grasp of the history and philosophy of science, a phenomenon that plagues education the world over.

Contrary to the common understanding, an examination of the history and philosophy of Western modern science clearly shows that science is far from being objective. It is laden with the fundamental presuppositions and premises of the worldviews that construct the discipline. Fundamental questions such as 'Who am I?', 'Where do I come from?', 'Why am I here?', and 'What is the meaning of life?' (Vidal 2008, pp. 3–7 & Vidal 2014, pp. 317–323) all bear their weight in the foundation and trajectory of any discipline, including that of science. The section below presents a Western critique on modern science as astute answers to the real questions above.

### 21.2.3 *Western Voices on Modern (Mechanistic-Positivistic) Science*

The New World Encyclopedia attributes the origin of mechanistic philosophy to materialism. It holds that the universe 'is best understood as a completely mechanical system' and 'a system composed entirely of matter in motion under a complete and regular system of laws of nature'. Mechanists strive to explain 'every phenomenon in the universe [...] in terms [only] of mechanical laws'. It is 'often criticised for overlooking the organic interdependent relationships [...], its incompatibility with free will, and oversimplification of complex phenomena' (New World Encyclopedia n.d.). Notable mechanists are Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679), René Descartes (1596–1650), and Isaac Newton (1643–1727) (ibid.). The academic edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica refers to positivism as representing the thought of Auguste Comte (1798–1857), which describes a system as a set of experiential data, with the repudiation and exclusion of any metaphysical presuppositions, thus refuting transcendence and being 'antitheological'. It developed into logical positivism and logical empiricism. 'Most positivists have been utilitarians' with the 'object of worship [being] not the deity of the monotheistic faiths but humanity', thus rendering it 'anthropomorphic' (Encyclopaedia Britannica n.d.). Both philosophies

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<sup>4</sup>This observation was made throughout the present author's interactions with science students, researchers, academics, educators, professionals, and the general public in the period between 2009 and 2014. The author attests to the fact that she herself was subscribing to a milder but not dissimilar mindset until 5 years ago.

have been the conspicuous characteristics of Western modern science, which, at the bottom line, is agnostic (in the various shades of agnosticism, either being secularistic or atheistic).

Karl R. Popper (1902–1994), one of the ‘greatest philosophers of science of the twentieth century’ (Thornton 2013), gave an expository criticism in *The Myth of the Framework: In Defence of Science and Rationality*:

The History of science, even of modern science since the Renaissance, and especially since Francis Bacon [1561–1626], may be taken as an illustration [...]. Bacon was the prophet of the secularized religion of science. He replaced ‘God’ by the name ‘Nature’ [...]. Theology, the science of God, was replaced by the science of Nature. The laws of God were replaced by the laws of Nature. God’s power was replaced by the forces of Nature. And at a later date, God’s design and God’s judgements were replaced by natural selection. Theological determinism was replaced by scientific determinism, and the book of fate by the predictability of Nature. In short, *God’s omnipotence and omniscience were replaced by the omnipotence and omniscience of nature and by the virtual omniscience of natural science.* (Popper 1994, pp. 82–83. Emphasis added)

Richard Tarnas (1950–), the Swiss cultural-historian, in his bestseller *The Passion of the Western Mind: Understanding the Ideas That Have Shaped Our Worldview* stated:

This emergence of the modern mind, rooted in the rebellion against the medieval Church and the ancient authorities, and yet dependent upon and developing from both these matrices, took the three distinct and dialectically related forms of the Renaissance, the Reformation, and the Scientific Revolution. These collectively ended the cultural hegemony of the Catholic Church in Europe and established the more individualistic, sceptical, and secular spirit of the modern age. Out of that profound cultural transformation, [modern] science emerged as the West’s new faith [...]. Science ennobled that [modern] mind, showing it to be capable of directly comprehending the rational order of nature [...]. *No [...] such authority [was] needed, for every individual possessed within himself the means for attaining certain knowledge—his own reason and his observation of the empirical world.* (Tarnas 1991, pp. 282–283. Emphasis added)

The key towards dissolving the long-standing Western science-religion conflict thesis, albeit only at the philosophical level and with secular underpinnings, was delivered by the American physicist and philosopher of science, Thomas S. Kuhn [1922–1996], in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. The book was first published in 1962 after a long period of writing as the result of Kuhn’s exasperation with positivism. Kuhn’s historicism and ‘paradigm shifts’ are said to have been responsible towards the rise of postpositivism. He wrote:

If science is the constellation of facts, theories, and methods collected [...] then scientists are men who, successfully or not, have striven to contribute one or another element to that particular constellation [...]. An apparently arbitrary element, compounded of personal and historical accident, is always a formative ingredient of the beliefs espoused by a given scientific community at a given time. That element of arbitrariness does not, however, indicate that any scientific group could practice its trade without some set of received beliefs. (Kuhn 1996, pp. 1–4)

Tarnas (1991, p. 359) further noted:

[...] because scientific knowledge is a product of human interpretive structures that are themselves relative, variable, and creatively employed [...], the truths of science are neither absolute nor unequivocally objective. [...] the modern mind was left free of absolutes, *but also disconcertingly free of any solid ground.* (Emphasis added)

However, the momentum of modern science's discipline, even in the post-postmodern world of today, stands stubbornly on Western modern mechanistic-positivistic presuppositions. Whilst the debates at the philosophical level are challenging its very premises, the practices of science as well as the teachings of it be it in the West or in the East are still positivistic and mechanistic. As if to reaffirm the pedestal that Western modern science has enjoyed since Francis Bacon, Stephen Hawking (Hawking and Mlodinow 2010, p. 5) in his book *The Grand Design: New Answers to the Ultimate Questions of Life* declared the death of philosophy and that 'scientists have become the bearers of the torch of discoveries in our quest for knowledge'. The answer that he gave to the 'ultimate question' is that:

God [...] is *not* the answer of modern science [...] just as Darwin and Wallace explained how the apparently miraculous design of living forms could appear without intervention by a supreme being, the multiverse concept can explain the fine-tuning of physical law *without the need of a benevolent creator [...]*. (Hawking and Mlodinow 2010, pp. 164–165. Emphasis added)

Adding on to these is the postmodernists' annihilation of truth, leaving humanity in a free fall to the bottomless pit of nihilism. It has to be acknowledged, however, that there are Western scientists who do believe in theistic science and do not subscribe to agnosticism. Francis S. Collins, head of the Human Genome Project, is one such figure. A leading scientist and former atheist (Collins 2006, p. 16), Collins became ever more convinced of his faith in God with his involvement in the sequencing of the Human Genome Project, which he describes as 'both a stunning scientific achievement and an occasion of worship' (ibid., p. 3). In *The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief*, he argued that 'belief in God can be an entirely rational choice, and that the principles of faith are, in fact, complementary with the principles of science' (ibid.).

In addressing the epistemological 'riddles' that Western scientists, thinkers, and philosophers have been addressing since Plato and Aristotle (Tarnas 1991, pp. 436–437), Tarnas offered an answer in his epilogue:

[...] that the bold conjectures and myths that the human mind produces in the quest for knowledge ultimately come from something far deeper than a purely human source. They come from the wellspring of nature itself, from the universal unconscious that is bringing forth through the human mind and human imagination its own gradually unfolding reality [...]. (ibid., p. 359)

The present author's understanding on Tarnas's 'universal unconscious' is of two types:

- (i) The 'unconscious' that is behind Western modern thoughts' conjectures and myths—the manifest transgression and injustices of the worldview(s) that have formed the Western modern psyche of the West and the East; the refusal to

acknowledge God; the exclusion of the Creator from humanity and the universe; and the illegitimate emplacement of human reason supplanting God.

- (ii) The ‘universal unconscious’ that submits to God, the Lord Creator and Sustainer, the uncorrupted innate nature of human conscience, *al-ḥiṭrah al-insānī*, that is very much distinct among the *ūlū al-albāb*; blessed by the Divine Grace, Mercy, and Guidance of God and thus protected from blind conjectures and myths.

Confronted with the contemporary systemic crises brought about by and in the form of atheism and liberalism in the West and the East in the guise of civil liberty and human rights (dissolution of human values, hedonism, and sensate culture of materialism and consumerism), chronic degradation of the environment, global warming, and acute climate change, Hans Küng (1928–)<sup>5</sup> challenged the Muslims and Christians for a solution:

The price that the West had to pay for the [...] epoch-making change in values and norms [...] of late-modernity [...] was a high one: the other spheres of life were left with no religions and indeed largely also with no moral basis and ultimate horizon of meaning [...]. From this follows a *deep crisis of orientation and [...] a desperate search for meaning, criteria and a shared basis for values*. Like absolutised faith, so too absolutised reason can set free destructive energies, with devastating effects [...] *Here is a new task for Muslims and Christians together*. (Küng 2007, pp. 649–650. Emphasis added)

Edward O. Wilson (1929–), an American professor of biology and a pioneer of sociobiology, argued for the prospect of consilience or the linking together of principles between all the different disciplines of knowledge; for ‘the material world at least, the momentum is overwhelmingly’ turning ‘toward conceptual unity’ (Wilson 1999, p. 11). He said:

Which world view prevails, religious transcendentalism or scientific empiricism, will make a great difference in the way humanity claims the future [...] *Science faces in ethics and religion its most interesting and possibly humbling challenge*, while *religion must somehow find the way to incorporate the discoveries of science in order to retain credibility*. (ibid., p. 290. Emphasis added)

Though vexed towards the ‘secularization of the human epic and of religion itself’ (ibid.), Wilson’s voice lends a degree of familiarity with the different reactions and efforts that have sprung up from the Muslim world. The above account provides small glimpses on the trajectory of highly significant voices, if not the mainstream, projecting forth from Western thought and discourses.

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<sup>5</sup>Hans Küng is the President of the Global Ethic Foundation and an acclaimed scholar of theology and philosophy from Switzerland. He authored a more than 700-page treatise, which, in English, bears the title *Islam: Past, Present and Future*.

### 21.2.4 *Voices from the Muslim World*

The *Tawhidic* worldview or *al-taṣawwur* (Sayyid Qutb 1995) of the Qur'an addresses matters pertaining to theology, cosmology, anthropology, ontology, epistemology, teleology, axiology, and eschatology. Sayyid Qutb explained that *al-Taṣawwur al-Islāmī* stands in harmony with the nature of humanity, i.e. '*fiṭrah al-bashariyyah*' (Qutb 1995, p. 104) as it comes forth from the Creator's Divine ordainment (ibid., p. 147). He described the four fundamental constituents of *al-Taṣawwur al-Islāmī*, which are as follows: (i) '*al-ḥaqīqah al-Ulūhiyyah*' (ibid., p. 83) or the reality of God which manifests and is reflected through; (ii) '*al-ḥaqīqah al-kauniyyah wa al-ḥayāh al-āmmah*' (ibid., pp. 212–225), i.e. the reality of the cosmos and life in general; (iii) '*al-ḥaqīqah al-insāniyyah*' (ibid., pp. 213–223), i.e. the reality of man as evinced throughout history; and (iv) '*ḥaqīqah al-ḥayāh*' (ibid., pp. 223–225), i.e. the reality of life as portrayed by the angels, prophets, and righteous peoples. In *Islamic Concept and Its Characteristics*, Qutb (n.d.) explained that the most fundamental characteristic that the worldview of Islam holds, which makes it distinct from the others, is its Divine origin through Qur'anic Revelation, instead of from what he called 'intellectual rubbish' – in the forms of either purely rational philosophical concepts or paganistic animism and superstitions (ibid., p. 13). A point of departure that the Qur'an has, which sets it above and beyond other Revelations prior to it, Qutb explained, is that as the Final Message from God, it is preserved in its original form till the end of time,<sup>6</sup> hence its 'permanence', 'comprehensiveness', 'balance', 'dynamism', and 'realism' (ibid., pp. 27–28).

There has been a pressing necessity to 'recast' the anthropocentric contemporary science in light of the theocentric, i.e. *Tawhidic* worldview of the Qur'an, where reason is placed on the right pedestal and in the perspective of total submission and absolute subservience to God Almighty. Efforts at reintegration in the dichotomous postcolonial Muslim world are exemplified by illustrious reformers such as Rashid Rida (1865–1935), Muhammad Iqbal (1877–1938), Hassan al-Banna (1906–1949), Sayyid Qutb (1906–1966), Abu'l A'la Maududi (1903–1979), HJ. Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah (1908–1981), and Muhammad Natsir (1908–1993). Later efforts were typified by notable scholars such as Muhammad al-Mubarak (1912–1981), R. Garaudy (1913–2012), Isma'il R. al-Faruqi (1921–1986), S. A. Ashraf (1925–1998), S. Hossein Nasr (1933–), and Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas (1931–), the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) with its earlier '*Islamization*' series, and the World Conferences on Muslim Education (WCOME).<sup>7</sup> Efforts at

<sup>6</sup> '*We have, without doubt, sent down the Message and We will assuredly guard it (from corruption)*' (Q. 15:9).

<sup>7</sup> The first WCOME in 1977 was focused on 'Aims and Objectives of Islamic Education'; the second on 'Reclassification of Knowledge (1980)'; the third on 'Textbook Development' (1981); and the fourth WCOME deliberated on 'Teaching Methodology' (1982) (World Centre for Islamic Education 1983). There have been subsequent WCOMES' the eighth was held in 2012 in Malaysia, with focus on 'Islamization of Education: An Assessment of the Current Situation and Steps into the Future'.

reformation, renewal, and revival of the *ummah*, and at reintegration continue with works of different genres by Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi; M. Fazl-ul Rahman Ansari; Yusuf al-Qaradawi; Maulana Wahiduddin Khan; Fathy Yakan; Mehdi Golshani; Pervez Hoodbhoy; Malik Badri; Zaghoul el-Naggar; Ziauddin Sardar; Osman Bakar; Muzaffar Iqbal; Mulyadhi Kartanegara; Nidhal Guessoum; Shaharir M. Zin; Odeh Rashed Al-Jayyousi; and many others.

To a certain extent, the discourses have been successful in raising awareness among Muslims, with most literature having intellectual, spiritual, and affective appeal to scholars and academics at the tertiary level of education. One must examine, however, how much of the awareness brought about by the above discourses trickles down to the young, in whose hands lie the future of the *ummah*, especially those in secondary schools—a particularly critical developmental stage, whereby they are most impressionable cognitively, affectively, spiritually, socially, morally, and ethically.

### 21.3 Integration at School

Many Islamic educational institutions and schools have been established since the 1990s, each with their somewhat distinctive models of integration. This trend is especially felt in Muslim majority countries, but also in Muslim minority countries such as those in North America, Australia, Europe, and Southeast Asia (Zine 2007; Kutler 2009; Akbarzadeh and Saeed 2001; Shadid and Koningsveld 2006; Hengpiya 2006; Buang & Ismail 2007; Buang 2008; Dangor 2005). There has been commendable development of Islamic education in Malaysia, a leading nation of the Muslim world, especially with the position of Islam as ‘the religion of the Federation’.<sup>8</sup> This is illustrated succinctly by the National Education Policy.<sup>9</sup> *Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Menengah (KBSM)* or the Integrated Curriculum of Secondary School launched in 1989 was designed to include the inculcation of physical, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual capabilities and of agreed universal moral values across the curriculum. In line with its philosophy of Islamic education,<sup>10</sup> the Ministry of Education was also responsible in raising numerous *Sekolah-sekolah Agama Rakyat*

<sup>8</sup>The position of Islam as ‘the religion of the Federation’ is stated in the Malaysian Constitution, Part I, Article Three.

<sup>9</sup>The National education philosophy states: ‘Education in Malaysia is an ongoing effort towards further developing the potential of individuals in a holistic and integrated manner, so as to produce individuals who are intellectually, spiritually, emotionally, and physically balanced and harmonious, based on a firm belief in and devotion to God [...]’ (Ministry of Education 1989, p. v). See also <http://moe.gov.my/v/falsafah-pendidikan-kebangsaan>.

<sup>10</sup>The ministry’s philosophy of Islamic education states:

Islamic education is a continuous effort for the dissemination of knowledge, and proficiency and internalisation of Islam based on the Qur’an and *Sunnah* for the purpose of forming the attitude, competence, character and worldview of the servant of Allah who is aware of his responsibilities for developing the self, the society, the environment and the

(SAR) or the Peoples' Religious Schools to the mainstream along with *Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Agama (SMKA)* or National Religious Secondary Schools with *KBSM*, Islamic Studies streaming, and Arabic language (Bahagian Pendidikan Islam, Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia 2009, p. 27).

The Ministry of Education in Malaysia has, under its care, public schools such as *Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Agama* (National Religious Secondary Schools); *Sekolah Agama Negeri* (State Religious Schools); *Ma'had Tahfiz Sains* (Tahfiz—Science Secondary Schools); and *Sekolah Integrasi* (Integrated Schools). *Maktab Rendah Sains Mara (MRSM* or Mara Junior Science College) was established by the government's Council of Trust for the Indigenous People to prop up lagging Malay and other indigenous students in science. There has also been a rapid mushrooming of private Islamic and integrated schools. Of special interest is *Sekolah Imtiaz*, first established in 1995 as a small private school in Besut, Terengganu, with its 'Ūlūl al-bāb' [sic.] module, an idea sparked by Idris Jusoh in 1996 (see Baru et al. 2014). Since 2009, at least three MRSMs have adopted the 'Ūlūl al-bāb' model of Imtiaz (ibid., p. 2; also see [www.mara.gov.my](http://www.mara.gov.my)).

In Indonesia, the *Orde Baru* (New Order) governance (beginning in the 1970s) provided much needed funding towards improving Islamic schools, which were usually situated in far-flung remote areas. Five *Madrasah Aliyah Negeri* (fully state-owned and state-funded secondary Islamic schools) were established, enrolling select top students for a special programme with a curriculum ratio of 70 %:30 % of religious: general studies (Saridjo Marwan 2011, pp. 106–108). The *Era Reformasi* (beginning in 1997) witnessed concerted efforts in mobilising Islamic educational foundations towards further 'reformation' (ibid., pp. 129–162) and 'modernisation' (Hartono 2010, pp. 13–25) of the *pondok pesantren*, *madrasah*, and other systems.

The history of private Islamic education foundations such as *pesantrens* of *Muhammadiyah*, *Al-Azhar*, and others presents a long presence of reforms in Islamic education in Indonesia, especially post-September 11, 2001, to overcome accusations that they are 'breeding ground of radicalism' or '*talibanism*' (Azyumardi Azra 2011). *Al-Azhar* schools, for instance, are considered as among the most successful schools in Indonesia, with their '*sekolah unggul*' superior standards (Hartono 2010, pp. 26–45) based on performances in the national examinations. Most of these schools apply two curricula at once, i.e. the *Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan (KTSP)* (or the Indonesian school-based curriculum) and the *pesantren* curriculum, mostly with a 100 %:100 % formulation. In addition, schools under the *Jaringan Sekolah Islam Terpadu* or Integrated Schools Network subscribe to what is known as '*Kurikulum IPTEK+IMTAQ*', balancing '*Ilmu Pengetahuan Teknologi*' (*IPTEK*) or Technological Knowledge of *KTSP* with '*Iman dan Taqwa*' (*IMTAQ*) or faith and piety.

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nation towards integrity on earth and eternal felicity in the hereafter. (Ministry of Education 2009, p. 48. Translation is mine)



### 21.3.1 *Integration at School: Challenges*

Syed Ali Ashraf, as the organising secretary of the First WCOME Education, described succinctly in his *Crisis in Muslim Education*, more than three decades ago, '[...] The creation of a third system embracing an integrated system of education is necessary but integration is not an easy process' (Ashraf and Hussain 1979, pp. 16–17). Indeed, integration has never been easy. Despite the various commendable 'integration' attempts and models at schools, one needs to pose the following questions:

- (i) How is integration performed in the teaching of the natural sciences?
- (ii) Do any of the textbooks used fully integrate the Qur'anic worldview with the natural sciences?
- (iii) Are there any Islamic educational institutions/schools anywhere close to the ideal whereby integration constitutes a full merger between knowledge that is revealed and that which is acquired through reason, where:
  - a. The natural science curricula undergo a holistic reconstruction, reinterpretation, and redirection from the framework of, and organically infused with, the Qur'anic worldview
  - b. Whilst at the same time facilitating the 'Islamic religious knowledge' subjects to draw enrichment and benefits from science?
- (iv) How are the teachers trained towards integration both inside and outside the classrooms?

### 21.3.2 *Field Research*

As an attempt to answer the questions above, field research and surveys were conducted between December 2010 and January 2013. These included visits to Southern Thailand,<sup>11</sup> Malaysia,<sup>12</sup> and Indonesia<sup>13</sup> and a few private schools in Ontario, Canada<sup>14</sup>; Singapore; Brunei; and Mindanao in the Philippines.<sup>15</sup> In-depth qualita-

<sup>11</sup> Four private schools in Yala, Pattani, and Hat Yai.

<sup>12</sup> Seven public and six private schools, including *MRSMs* and *Ma'had Tahfiz Sains* in Kuala Lumpur, Selangor, Negeri Sembilan, Terengganu, and Kelantan.

<sup>13</sup> One public and nine private schools including *Ma'ahad Aliyah Negeri*, *Al-Azhar*, and *Muhammadiyah* schools in Jakarta and its suburbs.

<sup>14</sup> The present author conducted and participated in the field research and surveys in Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia. She has hands-on teaching and administrative experience in Islamic primary and secondary schools in Malaysia as well as in an Islamic secondary school in British Columbia, Canada.

<sup>15</sup> The Chairman of the Natural Science from the Worldview of the Qur'an Project and supervisor of the present author, Dist. Prof. Tan Sri Dr. M. Kamal Hassan, led the field researches and surveys in Thailand, Indonesia, Ontario, Singapore, Brunei, and Mindanao.

tive interviews were carried out, apart from interactions with teachers, students, school administrators, and board members. Relevant printed materials, textbooks, and information from the schools' websites were analysed. In addition, the present author's hands-on experience in Islamic secondary school teaching and administrating provided her some valuable insights as to the nature of integration attempts at schools and the problems and challenges associated with them.

### **21.3.3 Findings of Field Research**

In general, our field research, surveys, and hands-on experience show that:

- (i) Due to the lack of comprehensive knowledge on the subject matter of integration (i.e. why, what, when, and how), time constraints, and demands of the formal syllabi and examinations, 'integration' is left to the devices of each institution or, worse, to individual teachers (normally the case).
- (ii) Experts, scholars, administrators, teachers, and members of the public make various efforts at 'integration' based on each individual's understanding or collective awareness, instead of integration being institutionalised or formalised in the curricula.
- (iii) 'Integration' is generally implemented with the study of 'Islamic religious knowledge' and the natural sciences in parallel under one roof, with little or zero intersection between them.
- (iv) An 'integrated curriculum' most often is limited to the observances of daily prayers, Qur'anic recitation/memorisation, supplications, etiquette, character development, and co-curricular activities.
- (v) Teachers lack training but are encouraged to improvise integration on their own initiative and creativity, with little or no formal guidance or supervision.
- (vi) All of these problems boil down to the stark lack of secondary school curricula, modules, and textbooks of the natural sciences (that we found in English, Malay, Indonesian, Thai, Tagalog) written from the worldview of the Qur'an and displaying a full merger between the two.
- (vii) As such, there is a dire need for such materials as was voiced by all teachers, administrators, and members of school boards.

It must be emphasised that the issue of the need for fully integrated textbooks (i.e. between the Islamic/*Tawhidic*/Qur'anic worldview and the sciences) has been amply discussed and deliberated on since the third WCOME in 1981, which convened around textbook development. Concrete results, however, have yet to materialise. This is evidenced by the fact that the secondary school curricula of the natural sciences and the textbooks used and available in the market, by and large, are based on the conventional model of the Western modern (mechanistic-positivistic) worldview, in which God and His attributes are excluded from the study of nature, man, and the universe. There are, nevertheless, some Qur'anic verses and supplications in the opening of, or at best sparsely interspersed, in some of the 'integrated materials'.

## 21.4 Proposed Science Education in Islamic Secondary Schools

With the benefit of having undertaken extensive research and surveys and so appreciating the reality of the state of affairs and the long wait by teachers, educators, administrators, and concerned stakeholders, we humbly submit a consolidated model of the ‘*Ūlū al-bāb*’ [sic.] module. The ‘*Ūlū al-bāb*’ approach was first introduced in *Sekolah Imtiaz* in Terengganu, Malaysia.

### 21.4.1 *The Ūlū al-Albāb Model*

Integrating the natural sciences with the worldview of the Qur’an constitutes part of ongoing and continuing efforts towards reformation (*tajdīd*) and renewal (*iṣlāḥ*) of the *ummah* and revival (*iḥyā’*) of the comprehensive, integrative, and well-balanced holistic nature of the *Tawhīdic* message of Islam. It also constitutes a striving to bring relevance of the Qur’an to students of science and the relevance of the natural sciences to Muslim students.

#### 21.4.1.1 *Ūlū al-Albāb*

The phrase ‘*Ūlū al-Albāb*’ occurs in 16 places in the Qur’an.<sup>16</sup> In similar contexts, ‘*Ūlū al-Nuhā*’ occurs twice.<sup>17</sup> Related to these are references to ‘*Ūlū al-Abṣār*’ thrice<sup>18</sup> and ‘*Ūlū al-Aidī wa al-Abṣār*’ once.<sup>19</sup> Based on studies of several reputable Arabic-English dictionaries<sup>20</sup> and seven English translations and commentaries of the Qur’an,<sup>21</sup> on all 22 verses describing the above references, the present author

<sup>16</sup>They are Q. 2:179, 197 & 267; 3:7 & 190; 5:100; 12:111; 13:19; 14:52; 38:29 & 43; 39:9, 18 & 21; 40:54 and 65:10.

<sup>17</sup>Q. 20:54 & 128.

<sup>18</sup>Q. 3:13; 24:44; 59:2.

<sup>19</sup>(Q. 38:45).

<sup>20</sup>*Albāb* is the plural of *lubb*, referring to ‘what is inside, the heart, or kernel’; that is ‘pure, the choicest, best part of anything’ (Lane 1968, p. 2643). The *lubb* of a human being is ‘the understanding, intellect, intelligence [...] that is put into the heart [...], because it is the choicest or best part of him [...] not so called unless it is pure from cupidity, or lust, and foul imaginations [...] and therefore has a more special sense than ‘aql (ibid.). The Dictionary of Islamic Terms translates *Ūlū* as ‘owners of, possessors of, holders of, masters of, people of’ (al-Khudrawy, 2010, p. 35) and *Ūlū al-Albāb* as ‘those gifted with understanding hearts’ (ibid.: 36). The Arabic-English Dictionary of The Modern Literary Language states that the Arabic word *nuhā* means ‘intelligence’, ‘mind, intellect, limit, utmost degree’ (Madina 1973, p. 695).

<sup>21</sup>A study of eightseven English translations and commentaries of the Qur’an (Al-Hilali and Khan 1427H; Basmeih 2007; Ibn ‘Abbas, 2007; Ibn Kathir, 2000; Maududi, 2006; M. Asad, 1980; Yusuf Ali, 1992) [see Reference list for this chapter] brings about the meaning of the distinctive Qur’anic

humbly submits the following: *Ūlū al-Albāb* are those whose sensory and intellectual faculties are so profound and refined through (what Al-Ghazzali terms as) *riyāḍah* and *tazkiyah al-nafs*—that their hearts,<sup>22</sup> (i) having been purified from the inclinations of the lower base desires or *hawā*, (ii) receive impressions and colouration by God Almighty ('*sibghah Allāh*'<sup>23</sup>) and (iii) permeate with the quintessence of illuminated reason and understanding, intelligences and discerning wisdom and insights, (iv) are able to draw conclusions to unearth the truth and correct guidance. They are scholars whom the Qur'an refers to as '[...] of all His servants, only such as endowed with [innate] knowledge stand [truly] in awe of God'.<sup>24</sup>

Constant awareness and remembrance (*dhikr*) of God Almighty and unfailing engagement of the mind (*fikr*) with 'readings' (*qira'āt*) on the world of God's creations, are the traits of the integrated personalities, characteristics of the early Muslim scholars (scientists being amongst a good majority of them). They were selfless and genius polymaths and able to chart the course of history through a millennia of glorious civilisation, which was, in the truest sense of the word, as scientific as it was Islamic. The *Ūlū al-Albāb* of the classical Islamic period and their works received Divine blessings (*barakah*) as evident through the sheer number of works and the unprecedented beneficial impacts that they imparted on the course of human civilisation.

#### 21.4.1.2 The Natural Science from the Worldview of the Qur'an (NSWVQ) Project

With the characteristics of the Qur'anic personality traits of the *Ūlū al-Albāb* as the structural framework, Project *NSWVQ* chaired by Distinguished Professor Dr. Mohd Kamal Hassan works towards a Malaysian model of reformed Islamic education, based on the integration of the natural sciences and the worldview of the Qur'an. This project was initiated in October 2011 through the production of a secondary school textbook of science comprising biology, chemistry, and physics, infused with and written from the worldview of the Qur'an. The project team consists of no less than 20 experts in the capacity of (i) researchers, (ii) authors and

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references to a special type of people, namely, the 'Ūlū al-Albāb' and 'Ūlū al-Nuhā', who essentially are those who 'have' or are 'endued' or 'endowed with' or 'possess' profound and refined 'understanding', 'wisdom', 'insight', 'intelligence', or 'sound mind', 'intellects', and 'reason'.

Of the above, Ibn Kathir's interpretation is most descriptive. *Ūlū al-Albāb* as those whose minds are of 'an upright nature' and in 'possession of [...] sound', 'intelligent [...] understanding', 'good comprehension' and 'reasoning'; able to 'contemplate about the true reality of things', 'draw lessons, gain wisdom and [thus] understand'; and *Ūlū al-Nuhā* as those whose sound minds possess 'correct understanding [...] and upright intelligence' (Ibn Kathir 2000).

<sup>22</sup> See Al-Ghazzali's treatment on the subject of the 'heart' (which comprises of the *qalb*, '*aql*, *rūḥ*, and *nafs*') in Al-Ghazzali (2009).

<sup>23</sup> (Q. 2:138).

<sup>24</sup> (Q. 35:28).

co-authors,<sup>25</sup> (iii) editors, and (iv) illustrators, all (except two) of whom are from various disciplines of the natural sciences.

The project has produced a three-volume work entitled *Natural Science from The Worldview of The Qur'an: An Introduction* (referred to as *NSWVQ*), a reference or supplementary textbook for biology, chemistry, and physics, intended for use in Islamic secondary schools in Malaysia and abroad, as well as by science educators and the public.<sup>26</sup> The science subject matter is based on the commonality of the Malaysian,<sup>27</sup> Indonesian,<sup>28</sup> Cambridge,<sup>29</sup> Bruneian,<sup>30</sup> Singaporean,<sup>31</sup> International Baccalaureate, Filipino, Canadian, and American curriculum and syllabi. Written from the worldview of the Qur'an and integrated with highlights of *turāth* (the Islamic civilisational legacy and heritage especially of scientific nature), the *NSWVQ* veers away from the conventional to:

- (i) Motivate Muslim students towards science and to become future scientists to help develop the *ummah*
- (ii) Promote learning beyond textbooks and examinations and to spark interests so students become self-initiated life-long learners
- (iii) Create awareness for learning science as a religious obligation (*farḍ*)
- (iv) Provide relevance of science to students' daily lives as Muslims
- (v) Facilitate education towards producing *Tawhidic*-inspired scientists and scientific minds who, with reference to the Qur'ān, study the Signs of Allah in the open book of the universe (*Āyāt Allāh al-kawniyyah*)
- (vi) Empower Islamic religious schools in producing Muslim students with *Tawhidic*-inspired scientific minds
- (vii) Provide the general public a *Tawhidic*/Islamic perspective on natural sciences at the secondary school level
- (viii) Create better awareness of the inherent synchrony between the Qur'an and science amongst readers

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<sup>25</sup>The present author is the Project Coordinator since project initiation in 2011, member of the research team and the chemistry author.

<sup>26</sup>*NSWVQ* undertakes to elevate the relevance of science beyond its apparent utility. As oft commanded in the Qur'an, the intellectual, affectional, moral, ethical, spiritual, and physical disciplines required in the study of nature are of the kind that surpasses base utility. Natural science, as a discipline that studies the Signs of God Almighty in the Cosmos, must bring the students of science to a higher motive, knowledge, and ethical consciousness, as a means of drawing them closer to Him.

<sup>27</sup>*Kurikulum Bersatu Sekolah Menengah*, the Malaysian Integrated Curriculum of Secondary School.

<sup>28</sup>*Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan*, the Indonesian school based curriculum.

<sup>29</sup>International General Certificate of Secondary Education and 'Advanced' Level, University of Cambridge International Examinations. The present author has extensive experience as a trained Cambridge IGCSE (mathematics, combined science, and chemistry) and A-level (chemistry) teacher.

<sup>30</sup>Brunei-Cambridge General Certificate of Education and 'Ordinary' Level.

<sup>31</sup>Singapore-Cambridge General Certificate of Education and 'Ordinary' Level.

- (ix) Assist Muslim teachers of science in integrating the *Tawhidic* worldview in teaching and developing the natural sciences
- (x) Assist Muslim students of natural sciences towards the goal of becoming natural scientists grounded in the *Tawhidic* worldview
- (xi) Be a stimulus for further publications of textbooks written from the framework of the Qur'anic worldview for use in elementary, secondary and tertiary educational institutions

*NSWVQ* presents the subject matter of biology, chemistry, and physics in integrated themes comprising (i) Introduction and Philosophical Premises; (ii) Man, Matter, and Living Things; (iii) Interactions and Interdependence; (iv) Energy; (v) Motion and Dynamics; (vi) Management of the Environment, Balance, Sustainability, and Continuity of Life; (vii) Technology and Development; and (viii) Astronomy and Space Exploration. The subject matter of science is presented from the worldview of the Qur'an with theology, epistemology, cosmology, ontology, anthropology, axiology, and eschatology and select aspects of *turāth* discreetly interwoven into the text. There are many instances in *NSWVQ* whereby pressing issues of cosmological, ontological, and axiological significance are juxtaposed with the current state of the environment. One example is the following extract:

#### **Going Further**

##### **The Earth: Equilibrium Tipped?**

You have seen earlier that the earth is a huge closed system and how dynamic the equilibrium which Allah The Most Gracious, the Magnificent Creator and Sustainer has established. Out of His Utmost Grace and Wisdom, millions upon millions of interactions and interdependencies, creations, and re-creations are happening simultaneously, all the while maintaining the delicate balance and equilibrium in nature.

You have learnt that any system at equilibrium may be interrupted with either the addition of external factors or the removal of some internal factors. The amazing character of a system in a state of equilibrium is its intelligent inherent ability to compensate the interruptions dynamically in order that the equilibrium is re-established. One may ponder how delicate an act of balancing this is! How well equipped and perfectly orchestrated all of these systems are!

Look within our bodies. A healthy person is in full equilibrium. Once a pathogen invades and causes us to fall sick, the equilibrium in our body is disturbed. We feel tired, feverish, and our temperature shoots up. Allah The Most Gracious has designed us in such a way that forces us to take rest so that our internal defence mechanism can work efficiently in removing this interruption to our health. The high temperature of the fever fights the pathogen until the internal equilibrium is re-established and we feel better.

Looking at the whole universe of creation, one must realise how elegant this balancing act is in maintaining the equilibrium in nature. The birth and death of stars, the moon, the weather patterns, the rainfalls, the sun, the flora, the fauna, the polar ice caps, and mountains and valleys, are all built into the dynamics of the equilibrium on earth. The earth itself – a tiny part of the bigger equilibrium in the Universe: how it revolves, the degree of the tilt of its axis, its orbit around the sun, its distance from the sun... is all intelligently engineered to perfection!

[Quotation: Q. *al-Dhariyat* 51:20; *al-Hijr* 15:19–25]

It is on earth that human beings are assigned as Allah's vicegerents. It is the earth and all that it contains with which Allah The Most Gracious has blessed us, for which we are immediately responsible and accountable.

Alas, look at the earth today... The environment is in a glut of crises never experienced before. Human beings manipulate and devastate nature and in return amass garbage on its surface. We reap diamonds, gold, and rare earth metals for riches, advanced iPads, iPods and smart phones, and leave the earth permanently scarred. We burn fossil fuels to keep us mobile and comfortable, but leave the earth hot and smouldering. We raze green forests to barren lands, cut hills and mountains flat, bore holes in the protective stratospheric ozone and through the earth's crust, spew noxious toxins in the atmosphere, rivers, lakes, and oceans.... Must we tip the natural equilibrium of the earth to the extent that it collapses?

[Quotation: Q. *al-Rum* 30:41]

Do something,<sup>32</sup> before it is too late!!! (Hassan, anticipated late 2015)

.....

## 21.5 Conclusion

One cannot escape from the compelling verses of the Qur'an, urging the believers to wholeheartedly engage themselves in observing, probing, contemplating, and experimenting, in the effort to understand the natural phenomena abounding in the universe, without and within ourselves, all with the sole purpose of understanding the universe better, hence knowing the Creator and getting closer to Him in sincere submission and servitude as God's vicegerents on earth. This is the attitude of the *Ūlū al-Albāb* as addressed in the Qur'an. Thus, the psyche, conscience, stance, and activism of the *Ūlū al-Albāb*—taking (the natural) sciences as a discipline, a body of knowledge, and an endeavour, towards attaining understanding of phenomena in the Cosmos, with a spirit and observance that are in full congruence with the Qur'anic Worldview—are the prerequisites for the re-emergence of a generation who will embrace the field as a personal religious obligation (*farḍ*) and its practise in the scientific community as a communal religious obligation (*farḍ kifāyah*). The pursuit of science not for the sake of fame, fortune, or mere utility but as a servitude (*'ubūdiyyah*) and vicegerency (*khilāfah*) in the name of God Almighty, and to spread goodness to all, is what the *ummah* needs to lift it from its currently beleaguered state. In truth, it is the very scientific attitude and worldview that the world needs in the face of the global crumbling of human dignity, the decay of environmental sustainability, and the collapse of civilisational integrity due to the fundamental systemic failures of modern and contemporary postmodern premises and structures. The *ummah* cannot afford to continue with its current trajectory of mimicking worldviews alien to the holistic and integrative nature of the Qur'an. These worldviews have caused the *ummah* to tear apart into shards that cannot, even at the very least, manage to sustain her survival, let alone to stand as the most justly balanced (*ummatan wasaṭa*)<sup>33</sup> and as the best community (*khaira ummah*),<sup>34</sup> offering

<sup>32</sup> See, for example, Al-Jayyousi (2012).

<sup>33</sup> (Q. 2:143).

<sup>34</sup> (Q. 3:110).

the world solutions that reflect mercy to the worlds (*rahmatan li'l-'ālamīn*).<sup>35</sup> It is indeed the religious obligation and responsibility of the Muslims, as the people with direct and intimate access to the Qur'anic criterion and guidance, to provide the answers.

*NSWVQ* is our humble attempt at addressing the long call for production of fully integrated science textbooks for use in educational instruction. This is as an initiating step towards a Malaysian model of reformed Islamic education, based on the integration of the natural sciences and worldview of the Qur'an, a small step towards the Qur'anic ideal. From our library and field works, it is clear that whilst there is a wealth of literature addressing intellectuals at tertiary education levels towards such integration, as well as some 'integrated' literature at preschool and primary school levels, there is a stark dearth of integrated material for the secondary levels—none that we have encountered written in the languages used in the schools visited. We believe that we are duty bound to address the secondary school age group, since this is the crucial period whereby the cognitive, affective, spiritual, moral, and ethical developments form a lasting worldview, which will in turn fashion their future endeavours. It is in their hands after all where the immediate future of the Muslim *ummah* lies. The textbook *NSWVQ* is but an introduction. We do hope that it will be an impetus for many other publications that study and present every aspect of the sciences (natural, social, and the humanities) from the worldview of the final Revelation, the Qur'an. Our future plans include the production of an *NSWVQ* teachers' guide, teachers trainings, workshops, and talks to secondary school students as well as the production of subject and grade-level specific *NSWVQ*, *inshā' Allāh*.

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<sup>35</sup>(Q. 21:107).



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# Chapter 22

## Teaching of Values in Science: Defining Its Universal Values

Muhammad Mubarak Bin Habib Mohamed

**Abstract** This article focuses on defining the universal values of natural science from the Tawhidic perspective. It begins by clarifying two phrases: ‘values in science’ and ‘universal values’. It then discusses issues concerning the universality of science as understood in the contemporary context. The article argues that although science in the Tawhidic perspective has its own particular traits, it also has universal values that transcend cultures and eras. Some of these universal values are then defined, namely, those of balance, order, harmony and beauty that emerged from viewing natural science through the Islamic theological lens. These values are discussed in relationship with the *Asmā’ Allāh al-Ḥusnā* (the most beautiful names of Allāh) as explained by Imam al-Ghazali in his book *al-Maqṣad al-Asnā fī Sharḥ Asmā’ Allāh al-Ḥusnā*. A few recommendations are provided on how these values could be infused into the science curricula.

### 22.1 Introduction

The primary aim of this article is to identify values of the natural world that transcend cultures and time. In particular, this research seeks to address three fundamental questions: Firstly, what are some universal values that the natural world exhibits? Secondly, how are these values derived? Thirdly, what are the practical steps to be taken in infusing these values into science curricula?

We first clarify three main terms found in the topic: ‘values’, ‘science’ and ‘universal’. Clarifying these terms will help define the phrases ‘values in science’ and ‘universal values’, as are used in this research. In establishing these meanings, we are much indebted to the writings of Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Osman Bakar, which

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illuminate this subject. Both scholars are contemporary intellectual figures in the field of philosophy of science, passionately arguing for a return to the Islamic intellectual heritage as a way of addressing the issue of the impoverishment of values in science in contemporary times.<sup>1</sup> Nasr argues that man's desire to conquer and dominate nature resulted in threatening the very existence of man himself. This is the very result of man turning nature into a quantitative domain of empirical facts and entities where the 'sciences of nature lost their symbolic intelligibility' (Nasr 1997, p. 21). A possible way to solve this crisis is to return nature to her rightful position as the link to 'the rest of the cosmos and to man' (Bakar 2007,<sup>2</sup> p. 38), and man to his position as her rightful and responsible custodian, living harmoniously with and benefiting from her.

Of particular interest is the idea of 'existential' values found within the natural world, which are manifested to mankind who often turns a blind eye to them. These 'existential' values are realised when nature, as an object of knowledge, is studied as a 'living organism' within the ambience of higher principles.

## 22.2 The Meanings of Science

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (n.d.), the word 'science' is the present participle of the root word *scire* in Latin which means 'to know'. Its Latin counterpart is *scientia* which means 'knowledge'. Lexicographically, science means 'the collective body of knowledge in a particular field or sphere' where before in the twelfth century, it included 'knowledge granted by God' (Ibid.). Clarence Karier (1986, p. 7) defined science as 'any organised knowledge which can also include theology'. Science is also being defined as 'knowledge derived from experience, study, or reflection' (Oxford n.d.) or 'knowledge from the careful study of the structure and behaviour of the physical world, especially by watching, measuring, and doing experiments, and the development of theories to describe the results of these activities' (Cambridge 2015). In *Webster's New World Dictionary* (Webster 1962, p. 1305), we observe the transformation to the definition of science from 'a state or fact of knowing and very often is taken in the sense of knowledge contrasted from intuition or belief' to 'a systematic knowledge based on sense perception', and then as a systematic knowledge of the physical world". Science according to modern understanding has restricted itself to only the physical world – through sense perception – with or without using tools as its only legitimate way of knowing. The

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<sup>1</sup>Seyyed Hossein Nasr argues for the restoration of the idea of 'sacredness' in all domains of knowledge especially in the field of natural science where the removal of metaphysical and cosmological principles of nature have resulted in the utilitarian attitude of man towards nature. See Nasr (1993). Osman Bakar uses *Tawhīd* as the most fundamental tool in showing the harmonious relation of science and Islam. *Tawhīd*, according to Bakar (2008), is a synthesising tool that is able to restore science to its sacred nature.

<sup>2</sup>Hereinafter cited as *Environmental Wisdom for Planet Earth*.

popular understanding of science is the study of the world of nature through observation and experimentation. A more stringent definition is found within the academic community where it denotes any branch of knowledge that has fulfilled the criteria to be admitted as an academic discipline and qualified as an independent field of study. This second definition is for when the term 'science' is used with another term to denote different fields of knowledge, such as social science, natural science, philosophical and religious science, political science and others. In this article, we use the popular definition of science, which indicates a study of the world of nature. Using the language of science curriculum in schools, this article assumes the components of science to be the domain mainly of the study of physics, chemistry and biology.

This popular understanding of science claims to be value-free as it is only concerned with the empirical status of the natural world, giving utmost importance to the objectivity of the realm of facts obtained through observation and experimentation. Science, as claimed, is objective, while values are not. Therefore, this objectivity makes science and scientific methods to be universal and free from any form of influence of subjectivity. This claim has been challenged by sociologists and philosophers of science and has resulted in the crumbling of the many pillars of positivism. More recently, philosophers of science have shown that science does express a wealth of epistemic and cultural values in practice and claim that the objectivity of science need not be compromised with the existence of these values (Allchin 2003).

### **22.3 What Are Universal Values That the Natural World Exhibits?**

Before we delineate the universal values, we should look at the different genres of values in science that are currently being emphasised in science curricula. Studies on values in science have been within the spheres of their relations to society and also to the practitioners and students of science. With regard to the usefulness of science to society, the values discussed are in relation to its benefits towards society, which are then linked to the progress of humanity. The value of progress, from the secular perspective, is taken to be the universal definition applied to all societies and cultures. The advancement of a society or culture is then judged based on its progress in science as defined by the said values. Values of science viewed from this perspective have led to the widening of the economic gap between the developing and developed countries. The utilisation of science in developed countries is higher due to the higher economic and political support received by practitioners and researchers. Some of these values – taken to be universals – do not transcend all cultures. Therefore, imposing them as universals and using them as a measurement of progress have led to inequality among societies.

Another perspective on values is provided by the practitioners and students of science. Discussions and research are focused on the moral compass of scientists and how it affects their objectivity in planning and conducting their research as well as the integrity of the data that they interpret. This set of values is termed 'ethical values of science' where the scientific enterprise is embedded in some particular culture and worldview, dealing with the personal values adopted by the practitioners and how it influences their work. A pedagogical approach that defines the teaching of this genre of values is focused on the affective domain of learning where cognitive aspects of science are related to values in life. For example, the different reactions of metals and acids in a chemistry lesson are related to social behaviours when students are involved in heated arguments with friends. Another example is in a physics classroom when the concept of conservation of energy is taught and related to the need to use green energy and attitudes towards conservation and sustainability of the environment. More often, these two genres of discussion are adopted into the science curriculum where teachers are asked to teach these values. Syllabuses and lesson plans can be written around these values and may become the primary attention of science curriculum.

In this article, we argue for another perspective on values in science that is often absent from scholarly discussions and at the same time not taught to science students. This perspective is equally important as the previous two genres on values if humanity is to effectively resolve the environmental crisis. This perspective of values arises from the monumental discussion of Seyyed Hossein Nasr (1997) in his book *Man and Nature* where he traced the spiritual impoverishment of nature in the contemporary understanding and interaction with nature. This 'impoverishment' view of nature has led to man exploiting nature without the slightest clue that nature is a 'living organism' that exhibits intrinsic values and qualities. Osman Bakar (2007, pp. 36–43) developed this idea in his *Environmental Wisdom for Planet Earth* where he proposed six foundational ideas on man's relation with the natural environment from the manifestation of *Tawhīd*. Using the ideas from these two books, one may argue for the existence of universal values in the natural world. These values become clear when one views nature as a 'living organism' with hierarchical grades of reality and manifestations. Although these values result from viewing nature from a particular perspective, either metaphysical or empirical, they are universal because the said values are found manifested in nature through the careful study of its unchanging reality underlying its changing phenomena that transcends physical time, space and diversity. These values inform us of the spiritual reality of nature and become the principles for harmonious coexistence between man and the former. It is from this perspective that 'values in science' are defined in this research as the 'intrinsic' values that exist in the world of nature. Given the immensity of the subject, we will focus on only four of these values, namely, harmony, balance, order and beauty.

## 22.4 The Universal Values of Science and Their Theological Foundation

The most fundamental theological foundation of these values is *Tawhīd*. The idea of oneness and unity that emerges from *Tawhīd* provides the springboard for the manifestation of divine names and attributes in the natural world. The 'Ash'arites theological interpretation, where God is constantly creating the world, allows these values to be seen in the natural realm. The perceived causal regularities of nature are the manifestation of divine custom. Contrary to the philosopher's interpretation, where the world is a necessary chain of causal effects that lead to a mechanical view independent of God, the 'Ash'arite theological interpretation gives spiritual meanings to the natural world where each creation carries one or a multiple of specific symbolic meanings corresponding to the divine realm. The natural world is not just facts and entities but contains hierarchies of meanings that lead towards truth. The natural world's existence is independent to the human mind. A person might not be able to see these different realities because one sees what he/she knows and desires. The different hierarchies of realities in nature including their corresponding 'intrinsic' values require the corresponding levels of consciousness in human beings in order to be able to witness them.

Another component of the theological foundation of these values emanates from the idea of duty ordained by God for humankind. This is the duty of becoming His *khalīfah* or vicegerent on earth. Humankind receives the legitimacy of responsibly, deriving benefits from nature due to their role as a *khalīfah*. At the same time, humankind must protect the earth from activities that directly or indirectly cause harm to nature. As *khalīfah*, the human race has been given power to lead all other creatures towards the realisation and fulfilment of universal purposes in accordance with the Will of the Creator. Nature, created with the characteristics of malleability, can be used responsibly by humans to assist them in accomplishing their role as *khalīfah*. Acting as the *khalīfah fi'l arḍ*, humankind is bestowed with the natural disposition of moving towards unity. *Tawhīd* teaches man that nature is also a creation of God for the sake of serving him. A broad and correct understanding of *Tawhīd* can lead human beings to realise that nature is the realm where God's names are manifested and a divine book of creation assists in them knowing God. God refers to His names as *Al-Ḥusnā* (the most beautiful), and this beauty is manifested in nature to show His greatness and perfection. In Islamic theology the essence of God cannot be captured through our observations as God is not similar to any of His creation. However, it is His creation that manifests His names and attributes to show His existence and perfection. The created universe is called *Al-Qur'ān al-Takwīnī*. The natural world is an open book of God for humankind to discover its mysteries. This idea originates from the *ḥadīth qudsī* that states that God wants to be known; therefore, He created the Universe. This implies that God's creation is also His revelation for otherwise it would be impossible for Him to be known from it (Bakar

2008, p. 26; Schoun 1972, p. 13). The Qur'an discusses these names and their relations to the natural world. In a later section this article attempts to conceptualise the values of harmony, balance, order and beauty in relation to His *Al-Asmā' al-Ḥusnā*.

The third pillar of the universal values is a logical development of the first and second pillars and deals with the idea of God sharing His names with His creation. In this regard, the clarification of God's names being manifested into the natural world is given a rational exposition by Imam al-Ghazali (1995)<sup>3</sup> in his *al-Maqṣad al-Asnā fī Sharḥ Asmā' Allāh al-Ḥusnā*. His exposition is found in part one of the book which is divided into four chapters.<sup>4</sup>

He started by delving into the differentiating characteristics of name, named and the act of naming. He focused on the issue of the relation between name and the objects that are to be named. In summary, Al-Ghazali stressed that name and the named can never be similar regardless of which attributes are used to describe God because God, by nature of His essence, is eternal. He stressed that 'name' in the Qur'anic verse 'Praise the name of thy Lord Most High'<sup>5</sup> is an addition by way of relation because what is praised is not the name, but the essence. The names are inspired by Him to humanity in order for mankind to remember Him, but these names are also known to God from eternity. Al-Ghazali (1995, p. 19) said:

...we intend the knowledge by the thing established in [human] minds and when related to the essence of God is existent and knowing in eternity and knows Himself to be existent and knowing. And His existence was affirmed in Himself and also in His knowledge. And the names which He will inspire in His servants and which He creates in their minds and speech were also known to Him. From this interpretation, it becomes possible to say there are names in eternity.

Imam Ghazali stressed the importance of 'name' where a name is not intended for its letter, but for the meanings by providing examples on how one should take upon the task of showing the distinct nature of one word over the other when they seemingly appear identical. For Al-Ghazali, his conviction towards the unique and distinctive feature of each 99 beautiful names of God made him explain how creation shares in meaning with His names. In Chap. 4 he explained three ways of

<sup>3</sup> Hereinafter it will be cited as *al-Maqṣad*.

<sup>4</sup> Imam al-Ghazali divided this book into three parts. Part one deals with preliminary notes and acts as an introduction where he discusses: (i) the difference between name, named and naming and in doing so exposes the errors of most groups regarding this matter, (ii) explanation of names close to one another in meaning and whether it is possible that they could be synonyms indicating only one meaning or must their meanings differ, (iii) on names which have different meanings and what is equivocal in relation to them and (iv) how man can obtain happiness by conforming to His names. Part two is divided into: (i) the clarification of the meaning of the 99 names of God, (ii) the explanation as to how the people of Sunnah reduce them to an essence with seven attributes and (iii) how the doctrine of the Mu'tazilites and the philosophers reduced them to a single essence without multiplicity. Part three is a supplementary section explaining: (i) that the names of God exceed 99 by divine instruction, (ii) how it is permissible to describe God by whatever may qualify Him and (iii) the advantage of the enumeration and specification of the 99 names.

<sup>5</sup> Qur'an 87:1.



sharing, namely, by way of witnessing and unveiling, longing to possess the attributes and by imitating and adorning these attributes. All these ways are methods in getting closer to the knowledge of God by perfecting oneself with His names. On this note for every name of God, Imam Ghazali started by explaining and purifying the feature that may be attributed to God by the names so as to lead the reader to an accurate depiction of them as intended by the Qur'an and Sunnah. For most of the names, there is the section on *tanbīh* (counsel) where he proposed how creation, especially humans, might themselves have a share in His attributes. The explication of al-Ghazali provides a well-rooted rational argument in relating God's beautiful names with some of the intrinsic values found in the natural world.

## 22.5 *Asmā' Allāh al-Ḥusnā* and the Universal Values of Science

A short explanation of the meaning of the values is first discussed before an explanation of how the *Asmā' Allāh al-Ḥusnā* are related to the values of harmony, balance, order and beauty as expounded by Imām al-Ghazālī is provided.

### 22.5.1 *Harmony and Balance*

A harmonious relation exists between organisms and their environments. In scientific terms, we call this environment the 'natural habitat' of a particular organism. Within this natural habitat, the organism exhibits its fullest potential as defined through the purpose of its creation by God. Researchers and scientists studying the natural world will have to conduct their observations and data gathering in the natural habitat of the organism in order to unlock the mysteries surrounding it. In this regard the Qur'an says, 'There is not an animal (that lives) on the earth, nor a being that flies on its wings but (forms part of) communities like you'.<sup>6</sup>

From the value of harmony, the value of balance emerges. The Qur'an says, 'And the firmament He has raised high, and He has set up the balance of everything in order that you may not transgress due balance. So maintain the balance and equity and fall not short of it'.<sup>7</sup> In another verse, the Qur'an stresses the principle of balance as a fundamental principle in the creation of living and nonliving things in nature. The Qur'an says, 'And the earth, We have spread out (like carpet), set thereon mountains firm and immovable and produced therein all kinds of things in due balance'.<sup>8</sup> Balance is created within an individual entity with the proper measure

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<sup>6</sup>Q. 6:38.

<sup>7</sup>Q. 55:7–9.

<sup>8</sup>Q. 15:19.

given to the parts and constituents that comprise it. As a result, when individual entities are placed within a larger collection of entities with different balanced features and characteristics, the result obtained will also be a balanced collection or community. The Qur'an says, 'Thus have We made of you an *ummah* justly balanced...'.<sup>9</sup> The term *ummah* used in the Qur'an does not just denote human beings as a community but refers to other living species,<sup>10</sup> such as bees.

### 22.5.2 *Order and Beauty*

The word 'order' carries a few meanings. It is imperative to clarify its meaning with respect to nature. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (n.d.), the word 'order', in its noun form, gives the meaning of 'any of the grades or ranks in an ordered or hierarchical structure characterised by sequence'. In its verb form, 'order' is 'to arrange methodically or suitably'. Therefore, we can say that order indicates the meaning of having a harmonious sequence or succession of events one after another. Another important concept implied by the word is the proper disposition of creation placed at its rightful position enabling it to fulfil its purpose of existence. With these two meanings, it becomes clear that the world of nature has been created in a certain and definite order. All that lives in the natural world follows an order regarding their position and development. The earth, with its unique role as a life-supporting planet, was created in an order and hierarchy starting from the lowest form of mineral matter to the most sophisticated animal creatures prior to man's appearance (Nasr 1996, pp. 643–662).<sup>11</sup> Each lower living organism becomes a means to support the one above directly or indirectly. The food chain indicates an order of how nature is organised where the lower living species fulfil a portion of their purpose of creation. The life cycle of living organisms points towards how orderly living creatures emerge from one stage to the other. Animals, regardless of species, undergo orderly forms within a specific time in each stage of their development. The current author considers that order is the natural rule of nature. That is how nature is organised and science is the study of this natural rule found in nature (Cambridge n.d.). No living organism seeks to jump a stage in their development or regress to a lower stage of their growth. This idea of order is not a novelty because it is taught in primary school science classes when discussing the food chain and life cycle. However, order as a value in science that shows balance, harmony and equilibrium in nature has not been given attention. The food chain, life cycle and other

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<sup>9</sup>Q. 2:143.

<sup>10</sup>Q. 6:38.

<sup>11</sup> This point was also highlighted during our postgraduate class within the module of 'The Quranic Foundation of Islamic Science' conducted by Emeritus Professor Datuk Dr. Osman Bakar at the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilisation (ISTAC) during the 2009–2010 semester.

examples are viewed and taught as facts and physical entities without any spiritual meaning given to them.

‘Beauty is in the eyes of the beholder’ is a common statement we always hear when we speak about human’s attraction towards aesthetics. The beauty of nature can be categorised into two categories: physical and abstract. Human beings are always fascinated by the breathtaking sceneries of nature and the complex yet harmonious colour combinations of living organisms. This beauty demonstrates to mankind the sheer perfection of creation in relation to the Perfect, leaving no details out in manifesting His beauty to the natural world. Beauty can also be described from an abstract perspective. In doing so, the works of mathematics, where simple yet concise equations are able to capture the complexity of nature, become beautiful. A good example is  $E=mc^2$ , such a simple formula that tells us about different relationships of measureable quantities, where Einstein was said to have exclaimed ‘what a simple and beautiful formula! It must be true then’ (Bakar 2014).

Harmony, balance and order may be thought to be synonymous, but each term carries its own specific characteristics although they are related. Beauty can be taken as a product of these three values coming together. Just as *Al-Khāliq* (The Creator), *Al-Bāri* (The Producer) and *Al-Muṣawwir* (The Fashioner) point towards creating and inventing, each has its distinguished meaning in relation to the attribute of God. God is *Al-Khāliq* by virtue of planning all things that are to be created in their proper measure and order. He is the Creator for planning the exact moment in creating, mixing and combining elements and parts. God’s knowledge of nature precedes and causes nature to exist. The knowledge of God who plans and ‘conceptualises’ nature is itself the cause of the existence of nature, while the fact that nature exists is the cause of the knowledge of one who studies nature.

God is *Al-Muṣawwir* by virtue of originating according to His plan for all the members and constituent parts of the whole universe. Creations are fashioned to be placed at different hierarchies according to their respective nature. Those placed higher in the hierarchy (like human beings) are those fit to be in such positions, and whatever is fitting to be below is in the lower part of the hierarchy. The parts are arranged in an extremely orderly fashion together with their constituents assembled and cooperating in discharging the obligations given to them. Changing the order would abolish the harmony and balance existing in and with the parts assembled. Al-Ghazali (1995, p. 70) affirmed:

Everyone who has a more abundant knowledge of these details has a greater comprehension of the meaning of the name *Al-Muṣawwir*. And this arrangement and conception is found in every part of the world, however small, all the way to the ant and atom and even in every one of the ant’s organs.

It is definitely the business of science and scientists to discover the mysteries and details of the members of the universe and their constituent parts. Approaching nature from the Tawhidic view, coupled with modern scientific tools, is an ever greater opportunity to appreciate the signs of the Creator. God gives an open invitation for us to discover Him through His works in the universe. *Al-Muṣawwir* fashioned the world in perfection in relation to Himself who is Perfect tout court. In this

way, the form of nature – exhibiting balance and harmony – coupled with order and beauty can cause a realisation for the human mind and soul seeking to unlock the mysteries of nature. In a way, the human being becomes a fashioner of nature as he realises the malleability of nature. Built upon a strong theological foundation, this attribute in the human being will lead him to strive towards being exposed to the outpouring mercy from God through nature, not towards exploiting and destroying nature. On this Al-Ghazali (1995, p. 71) said,

...while the form [of nature] existing in individuals is the cause of the cognitive forms being realised in the heart of man. In that way man benefits by knowing the meaning of the name *Al-Muṣawwir* among the names of God, for by acquiring the form in his soul he also becomes a fashioner, as it were, even if that be put metaphorically. For in point of fact, these cognitive forms only occur within him by the creation of God The Most High, and by His invention, not by one's own activity, but rather by one's striving to be exposed to the outpouring of the mercy of God the most high upon him.

God is the Producer by sheer virtue of originating and inventing from nothing according to what was planned. Al-Ghazali (1995, p. 69) stressed that 'sheer origination is one thing, and origination according to plan is another'. Nature's existence is attached to the power and knowledge of God where it is totally independent of the power of humans. God the Producer originates nature with unique features and characteristics stemming from His perfection. For instance, the perfection of geometrical shapes that exist within insect forms and their habitat shows perfect harmony and beauty of the species with its natural environment. The spider, for instance, weaves webs of strange shapes where the geometer is baffled by their roundness, the parallelism of their sides and by the symmetry of their organisation. The bees, having a geometrical shape close to being round, form their honeycomb as hexagons, a shape that has the fewest sides closest to a circle, but spacious and not leaving useless gaps when placed next to one other (Al-Ghazali 2013, pp. 91–92). This excellent precision shows the mathematical beauty of the harmonious relationship that animals have with their natural environment when *al-Bāri*' originates His creations from nothing. This is again the business of science and scientists to discover the principles of this exquisiteness of nature through empirical observation.

*Al-Qābiḍ* (He Who Contracts) and *Al-Bāsiṭ* (He Who Expands) is 'He who contracts hearts and restricts them by what He discloses to them of His exaltation and Majesty and His lack of concern, while He expands them by what He makes available to them of His godliness, kindness and beauty' (Al-Ghazali 1995, p. 81).<sup>12</sup> Nature instils the balance of fear and hope into humans when deadly natural disasters, like the earthquakes and hurricanes, destroy lives and homes creating the fear of death. In another instance, nature provides hope by pouring out natural resources that give sustenance for all the living organisms on the planet. Nature, as a life-supporting aspect of earth, presents gifts to humans free from recompense and interests for herself in the manner that *Al-Wahhāb* (The Bestower) 'gives to everyone what he needs, neither for recompense nor out of interest, either now or later' (Al-Ghazali

<sup>12</sup>The Sufis use this pair of names to mark the station of fear and hope in their journey towards closeness to God. See Schimmel (1976, pp. 128–129).

1995, p. 75). The harmony of living organisms, growing, living and roaming in nature exhibit the quality of a bestower that are carrying their roles as ordained by the Creator to support human beings in realising their role as the *khalifah*. Nature sacrifices herself for humans for the ‘sake of God alone – great and glorious, not to arrive at the comfort of paradise or to avoid the pain of hell, or for an immediate or future gain’ (Al-Ghazali 1995, p. 75).

We can establish many more relations between the values found in nature and the *Asmā’ Allāh al-Ḥusnā*, from the theological lens that views nature as a ‘creative field’ of God, open for human discovery. For example, *Al-Razzāq* (The Provider) is seen through nature’s value of being a life-supporting planet, and *Al-‘Alīm* (The Omniscient) is seen when nature is the object of science. A few recommendations shall be offered on how this conception of nature and these values can be infused into the science curriculum.

## 22.6 Recommendations on Teaching and Infusing Values into Science Curricula

Since much has been said about the theory of these universal values, some practical aspects of realising these values in the curriculum are discussed. It is our view that it is possible to actualise these ideas into the curriculum, especially in Muslim majority countries, more importantly in countries where Muslims are able to influence and change policies.

Some suggestions are provided below within the domains of teachers’ professional development (PD). The success of the PD will be dependent on the success of pilot models with appropriate and necessary refinements for different types of schools. With the assumption that science teachers are passionate about teaching and learning science and they want to impart and share with students the secrets and beauty of their discipline, it is suggested that professional learning communities (PLCs) be created among science teachers. These PLCs would be led by educators who are not only passionate about the Tawhidic perspectives of science, but also possess the intellectual capacity to comprehend its philosophical and epistemological underpinnings. The PLCs will function as the main PD drivers for the science teachers for a specified time. There are three main functions of the PD. Firstly, the PD must be able to reignite the passion of learning science in teachers. Although it may be assumed that all science teachers are science graduates and they are passionate about science, their passion in viewing science from an alternative paradigm – the Tawhidic paradigm – needs to be cultivated. Many science teachers are unaware of an alternative view of science because they are only exposed to the contemporary methods of understanding. In this part of the PD, academics and officers from the ministries are required to play an important role to identify potential teachers and plant the ‘passion seed’ in them regarding this alternative paradigm.

The second component of the PD is addressing the content knowledge of science teachers, which is related to the alternative paradigm of science suggested in the first component. With the new paradigm introduced, teachers may either be overwhelmed or pessimistic towards the new approach. They must be guided in gathering their experience and thoughts for crafting new lesson plans that will enable them to infuse the values mentioned above. Without proper guidance from experts, the teacher might just revert to their usual way of teaching science due to the difficulties they face in planning and writing the curriculum. Sample lesson plans can be suggested to them during PD sessions where teachers will discuss their merits and provide suggestions for improvement. Science teachers in this programme can select their most preferred topic or a topic which they are most confident to undergo infusion of the values suggested. Expert assistance, from the academics or ministry curriculum officers, must be readily available to teachers who require second opinions. Teachers may pilot these lesson plans in some of their classes. The implementation must be followed by a structured reflection facilitated by an expert. The classroom implementation process can be enhanced through lesson observations depending on the cultural context of the school.

The final component is having a sustained PD programme. PD should not be fragmented, single-time workshops or in-service training centred on the transmission of either content knowledge or classroom management skills presented from the speaker to the audience. PD for these science teachers needs to shift from technical training for specific skills to opportunities for intellectual professional growth. When teachers have the time and opportunity to describe their own views about learning and teaching and to compare, contrast and revise the said views, they come to understand the nature of exemplary science teaching. To complete the third component, this model should be cyclic and one that is not sequential, as teachers enter PD programmes at different levels. With a cyclic PD model, a teacher's passion can be reignited as he/she attends and experiences or when he/she has continuous dialogue and sharing with other teachers. This model adds another dimension to PD by giving room for culture building among teachers rather than just technical skills.

There is no PD model that is perfect or universally applicable. Identifying issues that may arise when implementing this model can provide better mental preparation for the MOE, school leaders and school management teams. One issue that may arise is how to form effective teams when all teachers entering the PD programme are at different levels of awareness and competency. Can an effective learning community be formed when teachers are operating at different points in a continuum of skills, awareness and attitude? How long will it take for trust to develop among the members of the team so that transparency can be achieved during group reflection and sharing? Another major issue is the support given to the selected science teachers from the school. Time and space for these science teachers to go through a PD is required. Resource constraint is the main struggle that every school faces when it comes to the deployment of teachers. Allowing teachers to go through months of PD means that the school needs to find alternative measures for PD in the school setting.

## 22.7 Conclusions

This article has tried to identify a new paradigm of values in science where these values have their theological foundation in the Tawhidic worldview. These universal values were discussed under the fundamental concept of Tawhidic science built upon three important pillars, namely, the idea of unity and oneness where the diversity of nature has a theological purpose of bringing learners of nature towards God. The second foundation is built from the idea of man as God's *khalifah* on earth, a responsibility ordained on man to lead creation towards realisation of their respective purposes of existence. The third pillar stems from the explication of Imām Al-Ghazali regarding the proper understanding of creation as sharing the names and qualities of God. Also discussed were the values of harmony, balance, order and beauty by relating them to some of the *Asmā' Allāh al-Ḥusnā* through the eyes of Al-Ghazali. This article concludes by emphasising the importance of translating these theoretical ideas into practical steps that will enable the infusion of these universal values into the teaching and learning of science. This can be achieved by close collaboration between academics, MOE officers and science teachers who believe in this alternative paradigm of values in science.

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## Chapter 23

# Positing a Spiritual Dimension for Science Education: Brunei Darussalam's Experience

Mohammad Hilmy Baihaqy bin Yussof and Osman Bakar

**Abstract** In the popular understanding of science education, there is no role for nonempirical knowledge. The purpose of this article is to show that from the perspective of a holistic (Tawhidic) science education, as insisted by Islamic epistemology, a spiritual dimension is not only possible, but desirable. The spiritual dimension of science education could be broad, since it encompasses many types of spiritual knowledge. Within the article's scope, it is only possible to discuss one limited aspect of this dimension, namely, the spiritual meaning and significance of some natural phenomena mentioned in the Qur'an and their implications for science education. Attempts have been made in a number of Muslim countries to incorporate elements of spiritual knowledge into the science curriculum in schools aiming to enhance the quality of both science and religious education. As a case study, this article looks at the initiative taken thus far by the Ministry of Education in Brunei Darussalam to introduce spiritual knowledge into the school science education and examines the various issues raised that need to be addressed, especially by the authorities.

### 23.1 Introduction

Nowadays, there is an urgent need to be deeply concerned with the spiritual dimensions of science education. One of the main reasons for this concern is that for too long the Western preoccupation with science and science education – and by extension much of the whole world itself – has focused only on the physical dimensions. This state of affairs is largely due to the secularisation of science, which seeks to separate science from religion so that anything in science considered to be religious or spiritual is deemed irrelevant.

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If we are to reverse the process of secularisation of science and to restore its spiritual dimensions, then there is a need to re-examine its modern definitions. Definitions of science are actually good indicators of the kinds of philosophies to which their respective formulators subscribe. Modern definitions of science are attempts at capturing the reality of secular or materialistic science just as traditional Islamic definitions of science tend to be broader so as to capture the richer reality of Islamic science, including its spiritual dimension.

As an illustration of this important difference between the two traditions of formulating definitions, let us consider some modern definitions and the response they invite from some contemporary Muslim scholars. According to Dampier (1989, p. xiii), science must submit knowledge to a 'rational investigation and try to trace causal relations among its parts'. Robert K Merton (1978, p. 268) maintained that science may be defined in one of the following ways:

1. As a set of characteristics and methods by means of which knowledge is certified
2. As a stock of accumulated knowledge stemming from the application of these methods
3. As a set of cultural values and mores governing the activities termed as scientific
4. Any combination of the foregoing definitions

However, Alparslan Açıkgenç (2014, p. 7) argued that all these descriptions do not offer any proper definition of science, but they may be useful in certain respects for the purpose of differentiating between science and other kinds of knowledge. If we examine definitions of science from the Western perspective, we find that there are no spiritual aspects included. Thus, it is important to distinguish between science from Western and Islamic perspectives. Akdogan (2008) similarly argued that Western science excludes spiritual knowledge from its concern; it is a product of dualism, which separates science from spirituality, while Islamic science is the product of a Tawhidic approach to the study of nature that does not exclude its spiritual dimensions.

## 23.2 Beliefs and Values in Science Education

In education, beliefs and values cannot be easily avoided and neither should they be. As human beings base their views and opinions on certain fundamentally held or perceived beliefs and values, so it is indeed vital that they are given central importance in our educational system. For instance, in Brunei Darussalam, the beliefs and values to be upheld by its citizens should be based on the national philosophy known as the 'Malay Islamic Monarchy' (*Melayu Islam Beraja* (MIB)). However, in reality, as observed by Butt (1991), the dichotomy between religion and state is plainly manifested in the educational system in most Muslim countries. In these countries, religious perspectives on science education are marginalised whereas secular perspectives take a centre stage. This is indeed pitiful, since Islam encourages Muslims

to learn science both for material benefit and to strengthen their Tawhidic beliefs, which are necessary for the development of spiritual values.

Osman Bakar (2014) noted that for centuries Muslim scientists and technologists pursued their scientific and technological activities within a spiritual and ethical framework. They believed in an epistemology in which the unity of science and spiritual knowledge is maintained. They defended this belief by appealing to both revelation (*wahy*) and reason (*'aql*) along with traditional (*naqliy*) and intellectual (*'aqliy*) arguments. *Naqliy* arguments are drawn from the Qur'an, hadith and other transmitted sources. On the other hand, *'aqliy* arguments are philosophical and scientific arguments that are developed through the independent exercise of reason. Thus, in Islamic tradition, these two types of arguments are not considered opposed to each other, but rather as being complementary and corroborative (Bakar 2014, p. 109). In this way, science education would enhance the development of both scientific and spiritual knowledge. Below are some of the spiritual beliefs and values that are important to science education from the Islamic perspective.

### ***23.2.1 Tawhīd as the Core Belief***

Tawhīd is the core component of a Muslim's spiritual development based as it is on the assertion of the unity of God. It also means that all of reality is unified in principle. In addition, everything in the universe comes from God and returns to God (Chittick 2001). It is always held to be the highest form of knowledge as well as the ultimate goal of all intellectual pursuits. In Islam, spiritual knowledge is closely associated with Tawhīd (God-consciousness). It is not only related to the world of the pure spirit but is also concerned with the manifestation of the spirit in the different orders of reality that make up the universe (Bakar 2008a). Thus, in this context, science education will help to affirm the unity as well as the greatness of God.

### ***23.2.2 The Qur'an as Source of Scientific and Spiritual Knowledge***

For Muslims, believing in the Qur'an is a fundamental article of faith. The Qur'an is the core basis for both spiritual knowledge and other kinds of knowledge, such as science. The Qur'an is also the main source of inspiration of the Muslim vision of the unity of science and spiritual knowledge. The idea of this unity follows from the idea of the unity of all knowledge, which in turn is derived from the principle of Divine Unity applied to the domain of human knowledge (Bakar 2008b).

In modern times, many scholars, both Muslim and non-Muslim, have attempted to interpret some of the Qur'anic verses in the light of present scientific knowledge. The contemporary Muslims' attempts to understand the Qur'an as a source of all knowledge is not new. Many great Muslim scholars in the past wrote about this. For

instance, al-Ghazali, in his book titled *Ihya 'Ulum al-Din* (The Revival of the Religious Sciences), quoted Ibn Mas'ud, a companion of the Prophet (*Peace be upon him*), as having said that if one desires to have the knowledge of the sciences of the ancients and the contemporaries, they should ponder over the Qur'an. Ibn Mas'ud further said: "In short, all sciences are included in the works and attributes of Allah, and the Qur'an is the explanation of His essence, attributes and works. There is no limit to these sciences and in the Qur'an there is an indication of their confluence." (Al-Ghazali, Vol. 1, p. 289)

Al-Ghazali in another book titled '*JawÉhir al-Qur'Én*', 'The Jewels of the Qur'an', which was written after the *Ihya Ulum al-Din*, discussed about the stemming of the sciences of the ancients and the contemporaries within the teachings of the Qur'an. In his opinion, all of the sciences are drawn from the knowledge of Allah as found in the Qur'an.

It must be understood that the Qur'an is not a book of science; however, it does provide knowledge of principles of the sciences, which are always related to spiritual knowledge.

### ***23.2.3 Acquiring Spiritual Lessons through Studying Natural Phenomena***

According to Bakar (2008a), nature is a source of various forms of knowledge, including mathematical, physical and metaphysical; the scientific and the spiritual; and the practical and aesthetical aspects. These different types of human knowledge about nature are possible, because the reality of nature is comprised of many aspects and dimensions. The prevailing contemporary Western understanding of nature and science, however, either ignores, belittles or denies altogether the metaphysical and spiritual aspects of nature.

In Islam, the unity of nature is considered as an image of the unity of God. Since science, in the Islamic perspective, is concerned with the whole reality of nature, its objectives must include attempts to derive spiritual knowledge about God from the various aspects of its study.

In the Qur'an, there are more than 750 verses dealing with natural phenomena, many of which urge man to reflect on them so that he will come to acknowledge, among other things, the wisdom, knowledge and power of God. This acknowledgement is an important aspect of what one may call 'spiritual knowledge about nature'. The following are examples of such verses:

Do you not see that Allah sends down rain from the sky and makes it flow as springs [and rivers] in the earth; then He produces thereby crops of varying colors; then they dry and you see them turned yellow; then He makes them [scattered] debris. Indeed in that is a reminder for those of understanding. (*al-Zumar* 39:2)

Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and earth, and the alternation of the night and the day, and the [great] ships which sail through the sea with that which benefits people, and what Allah has sent down from the heavens of rain, giving life thereby to the earth after its lifelessness and dispersing therein every [kind of] moving creature, and that in the change of the winds, and the clouds, which they trail like slaves between the heaven and the earth – (here) indeed are signs for a people who use reason. (*al-Baqarah* 2:164)

There are also verses such as the following that relate the study of natural phenomena with the acquisition of true faith and the realisation of Tawhīd:

We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth. But is it not sufficient concerning your Lord that He is, over all things, a Witness? (*Fussilat* 41:53)

The above verse shows how God invites His servants to see and reflect upon the natural phenomena. Through the reflection and observation of the order and coordination in the system He created, men will be able to draw closer to Him, thereby enhancing their spirituality.

### 23.3 Science Education in Brunei Darussalam

Since 1982, one of the core subjects for primary and secondary schools in Brunei Darussalam education is science. The learning process focused more on the development of communication through inquiry, conceptualising, reasoning and problem-solving skills. As reflected in the Ministry of Education's vision and mission statements, which are committed towards excellence in education, these are seen as imperatives in view of the current climate of rapid change in the educational environment. With this, a new educational system, known as the National Education System for the twenty-first century, or in Malay *Sistem Pendidikan Negara Abad ke-21* (SPN 21), was introduced, which is seen to be a critical and fundamental change in the education system. The SPN 21 is meant to offer a holistic education that aims at maximising the intellectual, spiritual, emotional, social as well as physical development of every student (Abdullah and Osman 2010). Thus, it is important that science education should cater to both physical and spiritual needs.

In Brunei Darussalam, Islamic education plays a very important role in national development. On September 24, 2012, His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah introduced the Compulsory Religious Education Order 2012. The order stated that Islamic religious education is compulsory for every Muslim child born on or after January 1, 2006, who resides in Brunei. In light of this Order, it is desirable to explore the ways and means whereby religious education in Brunei Darussalam can be strengthened. One of the best and most effective ways and means would be to promote the teachings of the Qur'an on science education. Thus, it is also important to undertake an in-depth examination of the content of the Qur'an pertaining to science education.

By referring to the Brunei Education Curriculum, Ahmad F. Yousif (2011) stated that 'Islamisation' or integration of Islamic values, such as by giving Qur'anic input into science education in the educational curriculum generally, was first introduced in 1985. At the time, the Curriculum Development Department (CDD) of the Ministry of Education, Brunei Darussalam, had produced a working chapter outlining some aims of the educational system in Brunei Darussalam, one of which was the assimilation of Islamic values through the school curriculum. In the section entitled 'Islamization of Knowledge', the CDD noted:

Implementation of Islamization of Knowledge will be in gradual stages, as a means of harmonizing the teaching and content of a number of the subjects studied in the schools of Negara Brunei Darussalam (NBD) with the teaching of Islamic religion. (Curriculum Development Department 1985)

The CDD's goal of integrating Islamic values into all aspects of the science curriculum conforms to the 'science from an Islamic perspective' point of view. Yousif (2011, p. 15) observed that not all knowledge taught in secular schools is synchronised with Islamic values. Therefore, it needs to be 'Islamised'. He again noted that one of the aims of 'Islamisation', as indicated by the CDD, is to show that 'modern knowledge' does not necessarily contradict the Qur'an. However, it is known that modern scientific knowledge is often elevated to the status of the arbitrator of truth and falsehood, while the Qur'an, as well as Prophetic hadiths, are used as supporting evidence to that so-called 'truth'. The working paper produced by the CDD, observed Yousif, did not mention how conflicts or potential conflicts between knowledge acquired at school and the principles of Islam could be resolved.

Yousif (2011, p. 16) also observed that only a few minor steps have been taken to inject Islamic values into the lower secondary science curriculum. The preface to the lower secondary science textbooks must now begin with '*Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Rahim*' meaning 'In the name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most Beneficent'. In addition, there are Qur'anic verses at the beginning of each chapter of the lower secondary science textbooks. However, there is a need to re-examine the appropriateness of the Qur'anic verses that have been chosen to illustrate the ideas and concepts under discussion.

## 23.4 Conclusion

Rightly understood and practised, science can be a useful means and tool to acquire spiritual knowledge about the world of nature and about God Himself. This is because the various natural phenomena studied by science are described in the Qur'an as signs of God. Natural phenomena reflect the attributes of God; thus, through this acquisition of knowledge about nature, man can also develop himself spiritually.

Taking science education in Brunei Darussalam as a case study, it is observed that certain measures have been taken by the educational authorities to develop

spiritual aspects of science education through the lower secondary science curriculum. However, it is important that Qur'anic verses and appropriate discussion to be included in the science textbooks are wisely chosen. Therefore, the verses now used in science textbooks should be re-examined as to their appropriateness. It was also discovered that no names of famous Muslim scientists and scholars are mentioned in the lower secondary science textbooks. Accordingly, we recommend that the illustrious Muslim scholars who contributed to science be discussed in these textbooks with the hope that Muslim students will be inspired to learn science from an Islamic perspective.

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## Chapter 24

# Displayed Features of a Student with High-Functioning Autism During Qur'anic Learning

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**Abstract** Autism, a unique symptom commonly experienced by boys, is a problem in the neurodevelopmental spectrum and it affects various aspects of learning. Although many researchers have focused on related issues, less emphasis has been given to learning problems related to religious education, for example, reading the Qur'an, which is also associated with Islamic ritual prayer (*ṣalāh*). Non-Arabic speakers with autism have a right to be given an equal opportunity to perform their religious obligations. The objective of this article is to characterise the natural features displayed by an autistic student in reading the Qur'an. A Malay boy, 8 years old, having high-functioning autism, was chosen as the subject of a month-long programme with sessions conducted three times weekly. He had already attended Qur'anic classes for at least six months and was capable of communicating verbally. NVivo software was used for this analysis and findings of each experimental session were recorded audiovisually using a digital camera and voice recorder. Tests involved reading the first chapter of the Qur'an (*al-Fatihah*) using five different sets: (a) The Malay translation, (b and c) the complete sets of the chapter in *rasm Uthmani* and *rasm Qiyasi*, respectively, and (d and e) the unorganised and incomplete sets of the chapter in *rasm Uthmani*, respectively. The findings suggest a selection of reading materials suitable for autistic individuals. In addition, identification of certain demonstrated features during Qur'anic lessons, which should be considered by teachers and parents for effectiveness in learning the Qur'an.

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## 24.1 Introduction

Mankind has been created to be citizens of various nations and races so as to know one another and to appreciate, and take heed of the diversity that God Almighty has designed. Among the normative population, there are also a number of individuals who are destined to live in a state less able to meet their daily needs, as they are different in terms of physical and/or mental status.

In the history of Islamic civilisation, there is lesser emphasis on narrations about specific teachings for and learning of people with disabilities (PWDs). However, preference is given to them in terms of performance of worship practices and jurisprudence (*‘ulūm al-fiqh*), for example, the exclusion from war as in the story of Amr Ibn al-Jamuh<sup>1</sup> and the limitation of the covering of the *‘awrah* (body parts prohibited to be seen) when interacting with PWDs. However, the story of Abdullah Ibn Maktum<sup>2</sup> clearly reminds us that PWDs should not be marginalised by society. The said event involved Ibn Maktum who interrupted a discussion between Prophet Muhammad (*pbuh*) and the Quraysh leaders with his questions. Prophet Muhammad (*pbuh*) displayed a displeased expression. Logically, Ibn Maktum, who was blind, could not be offended by the actions of the Prophet (*pbuh*) since he was unable to see this act. However, God rebuked the Prophet (*pbuh*) regardless. This event was revealed in the Qur’anic Surah *‘Abasa* to give an example to the *ummah* of Muhammad (*pbuh*) that conveying beneficial knowledge is not only important for the rich and powerful but also for the weak, the poor and other marginalised societal elements (Alu Syaikh 2008).

The Ministry of Education Malaysia website (n.d.) states that the educational philosophy in Malaysia emphasises on a holistic education in order to develop balanced individuals, spiritually, physically, intellectually and emotionally based on religious beliefs. An Islamic programme for special education called j-QAF (special education integration programme) has been initiated to ensure that Muslim students with special needs get early exposure, especially in worship practices (e.g., ablution and prayer) and Qur’anic reading skills using modules, such as *Iqra*.<sup>3</sup> This emphasis by the government towards religious education for Muslim students with special needs demonstrates the government’s determination to ensure that the potential of each student is developed fully and comprehensively. Hence, this *amānah* (duty) is welcomed by the Muslim community, including researchers who are eager to design the best approach to be applied in teaching classes of PWDs.

The Department of Social Welfare of Malaysia defines seven categories of PWDs, one of which involves learning problems in the understanding of the concerned individual to decipher normative issues. This is one of the problems faced by autistic people. One of the terms for autism in Arabic is *‘tawahhud’* (Tafaol Center n.d.), originating from the word *‘tawahhada’*, which means in ‘seclusion/isolation’.

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<sup>1</sup> Qur’an. (48:17).

<sup>2</sup> Q. (80:1–4).

<sup>3</sup> A highly effective online programme for learning Qur’anic recitation.

In other words, the characteristics of autistic individuals include wanting to be alone all the time and having their own thinking styles, which are difficult for others to understand.

The term 'autism' was first introduced in 1943 by Leo Kanner, a psychiatrist from John Hopkins Hospital, USA (Bender 1982). The etymology of the word comes from the Greek *autos*, meaning 'yourself'. Some of the criteria of autism also apply to the category of schizophrenia (Haycock 2009)<sup>4</sup> since the characteristics are similar, e.g., talking to oneself, self-harm and emotional instability. This assertion is supported by Burbach and Van der Zwaag (2009) who reported that autistic individuals and schizophrenia have similar genetic factors that may interfere with brain development mechanisms.

Typically, autism develops in boys, who are five times more likely to be diagnosed than are girls (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2014, p. 1). One factor why boys are more dominant in expressing the symptoms of autism is the fragile X syndrome (Brown et al. 1982) – an abnormal genetic condition involving the X chromosome structure.<sup>5</sup> Among the symptoms shown is the child not displaying any response to joint attention and/or pretending to play (a charade) (Baron-Cohen et al. 2000, p. 521). Lack of attention is also one of the characteristics of children with autism, especially in terms of making eye contact (Senju and Johnson 2009).

Autism is a disorder in the nervous system's developmental spectrum, which can be identified in a child as young as 3 years old. It involves problems in a few specific areas, including learning. The education policy of Malaysia has four basic concerns during the learning process: reading, writing, counting and basic reasoning (*Pelan Pembangunan Pendidikan Malaysia* 2013). However, less attention is given to learning problems directly associated with Islamic education, due to limitations of time and the study syllabus. A special methodology for reading the Qur'an should be established for PWDs. It was welcomed when some nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) were established to ensure this special group was not neglected in being integrated into the mainstream education system, especially in relation to Islamic education and norms in daily living. Among the NGOs that have been established for such a purpose is the *Yayasan Pendidikan Qur'an bagi Anak-anak Istimewa* (Yayasan FAQEH) (Wan Sabri et al. 2013).

Qur'an reading skills should be taught from an early age to enable autistic people to, at the very least, read the *al-Fatihah* chapter, as it is an obligatory portion of the daily prayers (*ṣalāḥ*). Research on the learning of autistic individuals, particularly in reading the Qur'an, has been relatively neglected.

This study focused on the reading process because it is fundamental to learning activities. For example, an individual can only complete one of the five pillars of Islam, such as praying, when she/he at least can read the *al-Fatihah*.

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<sup>4</sup> A critical mental illness and causes individual cannot function well in the workplace, maintaining interpersonal relationship, even in self-management.

<sup>5</sup> X chromosome is a sex-determining chromosome and found in both male and female.

This article discusses (1) the natural features displayed by an autistic student in reading the Qur'an, specifically *al-Fatihah*; (2) the reading speed of two types of typography commonly found in the writing of the Qur'an in Malaysia, namely, *rasm Uthmani* and *rasm Qiyasi*; and (3) the languages used in reading *al-Fatihah* (e.g., Arabic language and Malay language translation) for a non-Arab autistic speaker.

## 24.2 Methodology

The study was approved by the Ethics Committee of the Humanities Research Cluster, University of Malaya, for human involvement in the study (ref. no. UM.TNC2/RCH/UMREC). Ethical approval was obtained to ensure that the protocol of this study followed proper standards for studies involving human subjects. Written permission from the parents concerned was also obtained before commencing the study.

As instruments for this qualitative study (ethnography), an interview script for parents and specific versions of *al-Fatihah* for reading test sessions were used. Parents were interviewed before the subject participated in the test reading sessions.

### 24.2.1 Subject/Participant

An 8-year-old Malay Muslim boy was chosen as the subject in this study. Currently, he is a student at a primary level Islamic school in Petaling Jaya, Malaysia. His mother and teacher were interviewed to record his education and health background.

The subject was chosen through nonrandom sampling using the required criteria/ characteristics, for example, (1) the subject was officially diagnosed by a physician as having high-functioning autism under the umbrella of ASD (autism spectrum disorder), with good communication skills and cognitive functions (Ozonoff et al. 2002), (2) the subject had completed Qur'an reading classes for at least 6 months, and (3) the subject was able to communicate verbally.

The subject had received an early exposure to Qur'anic education when he was 6 years old, when he became accustomed to hearing Qur'anic recitations. His mother said (interview translation):

(... I already exposed him at the age of six years old... At the al-Badar Kindergarten. I had the *Iqra* teacher teach him.)

(I told the teacher that it was not necessary for her to make him know (how to read the Qur'an), just exposed him (to it) so that he knew what the Qur'an is... Let him look at it (the Qur'an)... I said that it was not necessary for him to remember... At that time he did not actually recognise any of the *hijaiyyah* letters)

In terms of reading the Qur'an, the student already surpassed the first stage of Qur'anic study, abled to recognise the *hijaiyyah* (Arabic) letters and was already at

the phase of reading those letters with diacritical marks (*sukūn*). Prior to this, the subject was taught to recognise letters with different diacritical marks (e.g. *sukūn*, *fathāh*, *kasrah*, *dammah*).

### 24.2.2 Instruments

Five set versions of *al-Fatihah* were used in each test session. Each of the set was printed (hardcopy) on A4 size paper: (a) the Malay language translation of *al-Fatihah* using the Latin alphabet (font: Times New Roman, size 14), (b and c) complete scripts of *al-Fatihah* in *rasm Uthmani* and *rasm Qiyasi*, respectively, and (d and e) incomplete and unorganised scripts of *al-Fatihah* in *rasm Uthmani*, respectively.

The history of Qur'an being manually written started during the time of Prophet Muhammad (*pbuh*), and was later completed during the caliphate of Sayyidina Uthman (*may God be pleased with him*). The process of rewriting the Qur'anic verses in Sayyidina Uthman's time was done using *rasm Uthmani* script, which used the principles of writing as in line with the speech without any addition or removal of the original writings (Fadzil 2007, pp. 74–75). *Rasm Qiyasi* (also known as *rasm Imla'i*) is a writing style based on the current Arabic language, which may actually not be appropriate in the writing of a mushaf (Ismail 2013, pp. 10–13). The writings of *al-Fatihah* in this study were prepared by exporting the writing styles of each *rasm Uthmani* and *rasm Qiyasi* into Microsoft Word using the software 'Qur'an in Word'. Each test session was audiovisually recorded using a digital camera and voice recorder. NVivo software was used to facilitate the process of coding and analysis.

### 24.2.3 Procedure

Test sessions were conducted after obtaining permission from the school administration and the parents. Prior to conducting the first test session, the subject was introduced by the teacher to the researcher to ensure that he would be comfortable with the researcher. This was important so as to avoid unharmonious situations during the test sessions, since autistic individuals have impaired social skills and are weak in recognising unfamiliar faces (Klin et al. 1999). To ensure that the researcher could interact well with the autistic subject, the researcher previously attended classes for autistic individuals in one of the PWD facilities for a year.

Each test session was conducted face to face between the researcher and the subject in a closed room at the selected school. The same venue was used for all the test sessions. Only the subject, the researcher and a research assistant (RA) were in the room during each test. The RA assisted in recording the time taken for the subject to complete each given task. Before starting the test, the researcher would

ensure good social interactions with the subject, e.g., by greeting him, inquiring how he was feeling for the day and reciting prayers (*du'ā*) together before the test.

The subject was given a set of printed copies of *al-Fatihah*, which were made up of the five different scripts. The RA started timing when the subject began reading the sets out loud. Each reading test took between 20 to 30 min. These audiovisually recorded tests were done thrice weekly for four weeks, except for when the subject could not attend due to unavoidable situations, e.g., health problems. The number of sessions performed in this study was in the range of studies by other researchers; for examples Oakley and co-workers (2013) performed interventions ten times in their research, with a single intervention done on a weekly basis, Campbell and Tincani (2011) also conducted a 20 min test every morning for an intervention process of 8 weeks duration.

The subject's reading durations throughout the study were benchmarked against a standard reading of *al-Fatihah* by ten world renowned reciters (*qārī*) obtained from websites, which combined readings by Rahman Al-Sudaīs, Saad al-Ghamidi, Mishary Rashid Alafasy, Abdelbasset Abdessamad, Ahmed Al-Ajmi, Maher Al Mueaqly, Fares Abbad, Omar Al Kazabri and Mohamed Seddik El Menchaoui (see Assabile n.d.). The average length of their recitations of *al-Fatihah* was 36.5 s.

Specific protocols were used throughout this study.<sup>6</sup> Firstly, the researcher prepared the audiovisual equipment before asking the subject into the room. Each test only began when the subject seemed comfortable. Each session started with the researcher inviting the subject to read together a specific prayer (*du'ā*) for learning activity. A few common social niceties were asked, e.g., how was his day? During the test, the subject was asked to read aloud each given set. Timing was recorded as soon as the subject started reciting *al-Fatihah*. The subject was also asked to indicate or point to the verses he was reading from each script with his finger. If the subject was not behaving in accordance with the instructions, the researcher would then use a hand stabilisation method (holding on to the student's palm or wrist) and instructing the subject to move his fingers. Each time when the subject completed his task, the researcher would praise him with phrases such as 'good job' or 'well done', without giving him any physical reward.

### 24.3 Discussion

Two main findings were derived from this preliminary study: (a) displayed features of an autistic student during the Qur'an reading learning session, and (b) writing styles of the Qur'anic typography suitable for autistic individuals.

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<sup>6</sup>No physical rewards (food/game) were offered throughout the reading process.

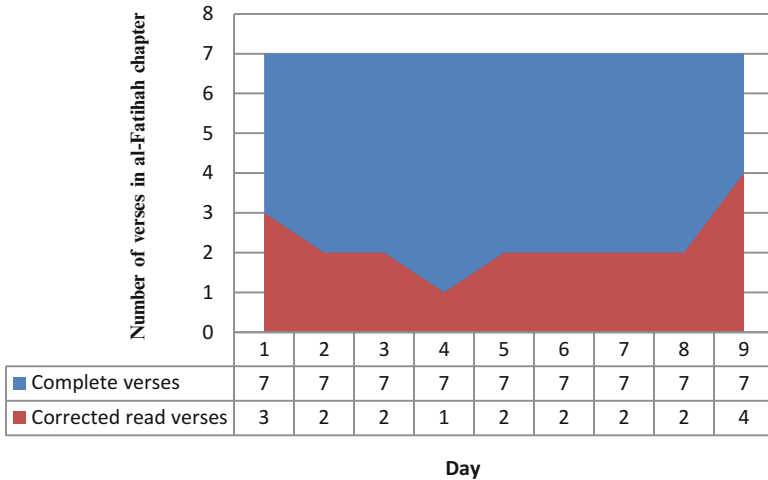


Fig. 24.1 Result of reading *al-Fatihah* in disarranged form, Set (d)

### 24.3.1 Features in Reading *Al-Fatihah*

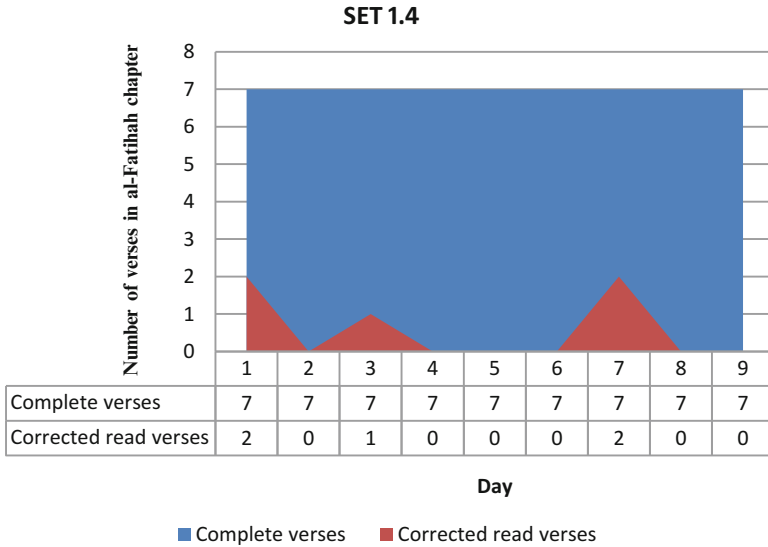
The process of reading loudly requires focus and concentration and the ability to vocalise reading from visual input. Reading skills involving short-term memory will progress to memorising skills involving long-term memory after an individual is familiar with certain readings.

From interviews with his mother and his teacher, it was made known to the researcher that the subject could read. Features demonstrated by the subject during reading included memorisation, split attention, influence of the mother tongue on a foreign language and being impacted by writing style (typography).

#### 24.3.1.1 Memorisation

The subject displayed memorisation skills for *al-Fatihah*. This was proven when the subject was asked to point out the writings of specific verses in *al-Fatihah* along with his recitation. The subject tended to recite verses which were totally different from what he pointed out. Normally, the verses he indicated were verses before the recited verses; i.e., his reading was faster.

More significant proof that memorisation overpowered the student’s reading skills was displayed when he was asked to read Set (d), which was *al-Fatihah* in disarranged form. The subject was able to read correctly only four out of seven of the verses during the test (Fig. 24.1). Similar results were obtained when involving the reading of Set (e), which had verses from *al-Fatihah* in an incomplete form (Fig. 24.2).



**Fig. 24.2** Result of reading *al-Fatihah* in incomplete form, Set (e)

Results from the daily nine times reading tests carried out showed that the subject preferred to maximise his memorisation skills for reading *al-Fatihah*. This is consistent with the study findings conducted by Ami Klin et al. (2007) on the interests of individuals with high-functioning autism, e.g., liking facts, having strong verbal and visual memory and learning mathematics, sensory acts, numbers and figures. Indeed, results showed that memorising facts or verbal memory is the dominant behaviour for individuals with high-functioning autism.

A reflection of the miracles of the Qur’an in ensuring that it can be read by all, including the PWDs, is expressed in God’s promise in verse 20 of *al-Muzzammil* (chapter 73) and in four verses (17, 22, 32 and 40) of *al-Qamar* (chapter 54) with the following meanings:<sup>7</sup>

So recite what is easy [for you] of the Qur’an. He has known that there will be among you those who are ill and others travelling throughout the land seeking [something] of the bounty of God and others fighting for the cause of God. So recite what is easy from it and establish prayer and give *zakah* and loans; give to God a goodly loan. And whatever good you put forward for yourselves – you will find it with God... (*al-Muzzammil* 73:20)

And We have certainly made the Qur’an easy for remembrance, so is there any who will remember? (*al-Qamar* 54:17)

Ibn Kathir explained these verses as a ruling that *al-Fatihah* is obligatory in prayer (*ṣalāḥ*) and a sign from God, and that He facilitates the tongue of Adam’s progeny to read His words while understanding His warnings and instructions (Alu Syaikh 2008).

<sup>7</sup>Translation of this verse (and following verses) was downloaded from <http://quran.com/>

**Table 24.1** Student used memorisation strategies after split attention

Day	Real verses	Read verses
1	Rabbil' alamin	Rabb <u>ighfirli</u>
3	Rabbil' alamin	Rabb <u>ighfirli wa liwa lida</u>
4	Rabbil' alamin	Rabbi <u>ghfirli waliwalidayya warhamhum kama rabbayana Soghira</u>
5	Rabbil' alamin	Rabb <u>ishrah li sadhri wayassirli ' amri wahlul uqdatan min lisani yafqahuuqauli</u>
	Alhamdulillahirabbil' alamin	Alhamdulillah <u>illazi At ' amana</u>
6	Lillahirabbil	Lilla <u>hita ' ala</u>
7	Malikiyau	Malik <u>innas</u>
8	Alhamdulillahirabbil' aamin	Al.. <u>Rabbishrahli</u>
	Sirotaalazinaan'am	Sirota <u>lmustaqim</u>
9	Alhamdulillahirabbil' alamin	Alhamdulillahirabb <u>ishrahli</u>

### 24.3.1.2 Split Attention

One important factor in reading is the ability to remain focused on the concerned reading material, e.g., book, magazine and paper. Thus, teachers for autistic individuals have the challenging task to ensure these students can maintain their focus throughout the reading activity.

In this study, the subject exhibited his focus only in reading the words at the beginning of the verses of *al-Fatihah*; then, he would guess the continuation in the verses concerned based on other verses, which he might have heard and/or read before. This mixing of the verses of *al-Fatihah* with other verses, many involving commonly recited prayers/ doa, is shown in Table 24.1. It happened when the subject was seen to lose his focus or had his attention split. Ailee et al. (2013) suggested that in order to maintain the attention of autistic children during learning activities, the use of appropriate computer systems is more efficient than just using paper, especially in overcoming split attention.

Such a proposal has been supported by other studies, which emphasised the use of ICT and appropriate application models during learning activities. Hence, it is important to develop applications for learning the Qur'an, which will capture the focus/attention of autistic individuals (Sutherland et al. 2004). It is expected that the use of ICT has positive effects in the Qur'anic learning by autistic individuals (Wang 2008).

### 24.3.1.3 Influence of Native Language on Skill in Reading Foreign Sentences/Verses

The language of the Qur'an is Arabic, which uses both single letters and connected letters in its sentences. Thus, one needs to be able to identify both single letters and connected letters in the process of reading the Qur'an, followed by the ability to read the letters with diacritics (*tashkīl* and *ḥarakah*). This is more complicated



**Table 24.2** Reading strategies of memorisation after split attention

Obsession word	Initial same syllable of interest	Final same syllable of interest
<i>Penyayang</i>	<i>Pe mbalasan, Pe murah</i>	<i>Yang</i>

than reading the writings of the Latin alphabet. It was then expected that the subject could read better Set (a), the translation of *al-Fatihah* in the Malay language using the Latin alphabet. However, this study showed that the student also had difficulty in reading the translation of *al-Fatihah* in his native language. The student had difficulty in spelling words with three or more syllables, as confirmed by the interview with his mother (interview translation):

The child can read already. Words up to two syllables are common (for him)... Such as ja-sa, gu-ru, sa-ya ...

Although the subject was still in the early stages of literacy for reading the Qur'an (Arabic language) and his native language (Malay language), the influence of memorisation caused the subject to read *al-Fatihah* faster than reading the Malay language translation. The subject also showed his obsession with certain words and tried to use methods of memorisation when spelling any words in Malay (Set a) with the same syllable (Table 24.2).

#### 24.3.1.4 Typography in Reading

Typography is the art of printing text. There are typography-related factors that influence the reading by individuals. Psychology of reading is a subfield of reading, which includes the facts related to the eye movements during reading (Kruger and Steyn 2014), writing systems, text features (Katzir et al. 2013) and external factors such as environment, lighting and emotion.

Different scholarly opinions exist on the methodology of Qur'anic writing; i.e., the writing format style and the arrangement cannot be changed (*tauqifi*) vs., can be modified to suit the sentences as long as the meanings do not change (*istilāhi*) (Alias et al. n.d.). *Rasm Uthmani* and *rasm Qiyasi* are two of the three forms of writing of the Qur'an commonly adopted; the third is *rasm Majid*. Qur'anic using *rasm Uthmani* and *rasm Qiyasi* is favoured in Malaysia, with the former being more popular. *Rasm Uthmani* was established during the time of Sayyidina Uthman ibn 'Affan (*may God be pleased with him*).

There are some obvious differences between the two patterns of this writing, including:

1. The script of *al-Fatihah* using *rasm Qiyasi* was written in a bolder font compared to that of *rasm Uthmani*.
2. The script of *al-Fatihah* using *rasm Uthmani* was written in a wider column compared to the column width of the script using *rasm Qiyasi*.

**Table 24.3** Reading duration (in seconds) using different typography (*rasm*)

No	Date	Memorisation (without looking at scripts)	<i>Rasm Uthmani</i> (Set b)	<i>Rasm Qiyasi</i> (Set c)
1	5/5/14	21.60 s	27 s	1.08.72
2	6/5/14	17.60 s	45.73 s	35.46 s
3	7/5/14	19.01 s	28.48 s	2.21.45 s
4	15/5/14	17.52 s	30.00 s	2.46.45 s
5	16/5/14	25.66 s	35.75 s	1.15.89 s
6	19/5/14	20.77 s	22.56 s	1.05.58 s
7	20/5/14	23.48 s	19.53 s	31.55 s
8	26/5/14	27.66 s	1.28.56 s	1.12.50 s
9	27/5/14	21.54 s	1.04.72 s	1.06.68 s
<b>Reading average</b>		<b>21.65 s</b>	<b>40.34 s</b>	<b>80.56 s</b>

Time measurements of the reading duration by the subject were taken in this study. Table 24.3 shows the comparison of reading duration of *al-Fatihah* between two styles of typography by the subject.

On average, the subject recited *al-Fatihah* without looking at the script faster than the recitation by the control group. The average rate of standard recitation was 36.5 s, with the subject's rate being almost two times faster. For a reading comparison of two scripts in different typography (*rasm Uthmani* and *rasm Qiyasi*), the subject demonstrated smooth reading when using *rasm Uthmani* with his average time almost similar to the standard reading. However, the student took longer time when reading *rasm Qiyasi* script.

Psychological studies reported that the perceptual text can influence the effectiveness of a reader to understand or read a visual text, depending on various text features, e.g., type of typography, font size (Beymer et al. 2008), colour (Hall and Hanna 2004) and spacing (Rayner 1986). Therefore, to ensure the effectiveness of individual reading, these factors must be considered.

### 24.3.1.5 Hallucination

Hallucinations are false perceptions of vision, sound, taste, smell or touch, and this perception of nonexistence sensory input results from mental disorders or drug abuse (Emma et al. 2010, p. 644). There were 2 days during the study when the subject exhibited different hallucinate-like situations (interview translation):

1. The subject did not want to open his mouth and only started reading when the researcher pretended to unzip his mouth.
2. The subject mentioned that a (nonexisting) person knocked on his head.
3. The subject spoke with this nonexisting person.

4. The subject demonstrated behaviour of mimicking the acts of consuming medicine and drinking water.
5. The subject had a tantrum due to 'his mouth being plastered' by the nonexisting person.

Depending on the circumstances, several cautionary steps were taken to ensure that the subject was not in the world of his hallucinations. For example, the researcher pretended to understand his hallucinations, i.e., pretending to unzip his mouth while continuing to give instructions/commands for him to read, allowing him to tell his story a bit and then promising to listen to the rest of his story only after he completed his task (positive reward). If the researcher gave aggressive feedback to his story, or going against his version of a situation, the subject would show the typical insecure emotions and become uncomfortable with the researcher (Videbeck et al. 2011, p. 268), leading to the interruption of the reading test session.

#### 24.3.1.6 Problem in Understanding the Instruction

Following given instructions may become a challenge for autistic individuals, and this could be related to them having comprehension problem associated with the Broca-Wernicke's area of the brain (Just et al. 1996). Hence, the subject commonly responded only after the researcher, herself, initiated the appropriate response to the instruction she had previously given. For example, when asked to read *al-Fatihah* the subject would remain silent until the researcher herself started to read the first verse; only then he would start reading and subsequently continue on with the next sentence (oral prompt).

#### 24.3.1.7 Echolalia

The subject also displayed the echolalia disorder during the learning process. Echolalia is the act of a person repeating a sentence, which has just been verbalised by another person (pathological repetition) (Susan Dood 2005, p. 63). This disorder is usually expressed by autistic individuals. Examples of this situation, which occurred during test sessions (interview translation), are as follows:

Researcher: What is this?  
 Subject: (no response)  
 Researcher: Ba *kasrah* (oral prompt)?  
 Subject: Bi.  
 Researcher: Then?  
 Subject: Then.  
 Researcher: Then.  
 Subject: Then

The subject repeated the researcher's words seriously without exhibiting awareness of what he had actually done.

### 24.3.2 *Psychology from the Islamic Perspective*

Understanding the thoughts of an individual is a matter which cannot be measured using specific physical parameters. However, the potential of human thinking can be tested through their behaviour. Knowledge about the soul/spirit was much debated by Western philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle and is also mentioned in the Qur'an.

#### 24.3.2.1 **Concept of Soul/Spirit**

According to Dr. Aisha Utz (2011) in her book *Psychology from the Islamic Perspective*, the creation of man from the world view of secularists is very different from the Islamic concept. Islam adopted the concept of the spiritual and metaphysical rather than just looking at a combination of biological brain functions such as the cognitive, emotional and behavioural elements (Nachiappan 2013). Man is like a vehicle driven by the soul/spirit; hence, the state of the soul/spirit of the individual will influence the direction of his thoughts, feelings and behaviours. The spirit is mentioned in the Qur'an:

And they ask you, [O Muhammad], about the spirit. Say, "The spirit is of the affair of my Lord. And mankind has not been given of knowledge except a little". (Q. *Al-Isra* 17:85)

Humans are created to complement each other; thus, the ability to get along well with others is dependent on a mutual understanding between individuals. Having a wide scope of understanding on how one can live in groups and respond relevantly to others is known as 'empathy'. Empathy not only involves the integration of processes of the frontal cortex but also the midbrain and the brainstem so as to control emotion, physiology of the body and one's liveliness (Decety 2011). This process is particularly important in learning activity.

Previous studies had referred the 'blank' thinking style of autistic individuals as 'mind blindness' (Frith 2001). This refers to the mental state of autistic individuals who cannot relate to their surrounding situation or environment. This is one of the factors that negatively affect their relationships with the people around them, regardless of whether it is their parents, guardians, family members, teachers or others.

However, it is human nature that in spite of whether one is a normative individual or with autism, they return to their *fiṭrah* (innate instinct) state, a pristine nature in human beings that leads them to seek for the truth and guidance from God Almighty. The *fiṭrah* will be more evident if the self is well nurtured on the right path in order to achieve the concept of Tawḥīd, such as teaching it to read the Qur'an, the performance of prayers and the like. Therefore, if a person – including an autistic individual – familiarised oneself with verses from the Noble Qur'an, then one's feelings and behaviour would naturally be on the right path towards God.

### 24.3.2.2 Psychology of Reading

The term *Iqra'* in Arabic is an instruction to read or to vocalise written or unwritten documents. This is different from the term *utlu* (Mohd. Yusoff 2013, p. 6), which means reading in the context of looking at a specific document. The book *Psychology of Reading*, stated that reading is the ability to extract visual information from the page and comprehend the meaning of the text (Pollatsek et al. 2012, pp. 24–25). There is still controversy about how exactly an individual processes the information she/he acquired. Most established is the viewpoint, recently reported by Rayner et al. (2012), that there are three steps of how this process occurs: sensory storage,<sup>8</sup> short-term memory<sup>9</sup> and long-term memory.<sup>10</sup>

Having difficulties in reading the Qur'an is categorised as one of the learning problems for PWDs, such as autistic individuals. However, from the Islamic viewpoint, it is believed that the effort to read the Qur'an will be rewarded both in the living world and in the hereafter. In fact, the reward will be more so for individuals with reading difficulties, e.g., those with autism who have difficulty even in the learning process of Qur'anic reading lessons as stated in Sahih Muslim:

Verily the one who recites the Qur'an beautifully, smoothly, and precisely, he will be in the company of the noble and obedient angels.

And as for the one who recites with difficulty, stammering or stumbling through its verses, then he will have twice that reward. (Al-Mindziri 2004)

Reading is a branch of linguistic studies that enables one to understand a particular language. Reading performance consists of two major components: listening and word decoding<sup>11</sup> (Inutsuka 2009). Listening to and understanding words and then subsequently converting them into written material or to sound (verbal) is a complex activity.

In the context of reading the Qur'an in Arabic by a non-Arabic-speaking subject with autism, there are other related factors: (1) the pattern of writing a language (typography), (2) the ability to read Arabic language (foreign language), and (3) reading the varied words, exact words and words that have the same pronunciation, but with their own specific meaning (pseudohomophones), and words that have the same pronunciation but have no meaning (pseudowords).

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<sup>8</sup> Involves echoic memory (identifies information from auditory system) and iconic memory (component of visual memory system).

<sup>9</sup> Involves working memory that actively functions during information processing.

<sup>10</sup> Involves episodic and semantic memory of experiences and facts.

<sup>11</sup> According to Gough and Tunmer (1986) as referred to in the PhD thesis of K. Inutsuka.

### 24.3.3 *Autism Awareness*

Autistic individuals make up a minority group. However, as reported by organisations such as the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC 2014), the global percentage of autistic individuals has increased over the years, as is similarly found in Malaysia (Idris 2014).

Autism awareness in Malaysia is on the rise as reflected by the many autism-related activities being organised by several nongovernmental organisations. It has even received the attention of the Prime Minister's Department, which has set up a Permata Kurnia Centre (n.d.) of the Permata programme, under the supervision of Datin Paduka Seri Rosmah Mansor (wife of the Prime Minister). It is encouraging that there are groups in the community who are sensitive about such issues.

However, there are still some people in the community who have no idea or knowledge about this disorder. For example, the mother of the subject of the study was only aware of her child's problems rather late because she assumed the relatively late development of her child was normal (interview translation):

(If I am not mistaken, his elder sister at the age of one year old could already talk, example: "Mom, my stuff fell off." When I asked my mother, she said, "It is normal, some kids are slow." But when he was already four years old, I felt his development was too slow. He was unable to understand my instructions. For example, he couldn't even understand if I were to ask him to pick up his milk bottle. I thought that was ridiculous for a four year old boy. Not speaking is one thing, but not understanding instructions is another... But my mother still said, "It is normal for kids to be slow...")

### 24.3.4 *Qur'anic Lesson Awareness for Persons with Disabilities*

Initiatives by concerned communities, teachers and parents in developing methods to ensure that PWDs are not disadvantaged in religious education are welcomed. Awareness of the importance of religious education to autistic individuals is also getting recognition in the Muslim community in Malaysia, although not as noticeable as for other PWDs. For example, the role of the Institute of Islamic Understanding Malaysia (IKIM) is significant in disseminating current religious issues related to PWDs, (e.g., performing worship and religious practices) through electronic media and scholarly discussions. Recently, IKIM organised an education for special children in Islam seminar (20–21 August 2014), which was attended by community representatives (parents/guardians, researchers, health service providers), and it received good media coverage.

Muslim academics have also begun to contribute to this goal in terms of studies conducted to help PWDs, especially the blind and the deaf in fostering Qur'anic learning.<sup>12</sup>

## 24.4 Conclusion

The findings suggest that preferred types of reading materials should be selected for autistic individuals as well as identifying individual features that should be carefully considered to improve the effectiveness of their Qur'anic learning. This information could benefit teachers and parents of autistic individuals. Our study showed that the subject was able to read fluently *al-Fatihah* written in *rasm Uthmani* compared to the version written in *rasm Qiyasi*. It is proposed that a Qur'anic *mushaf* with a larger distance between words (*kalimah*) or larger column width would be more suitable for autistic individuals. Further research is needed since the current study was only a pilot involving one subject.

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**Part VII**  
**History of Science and Technology in**  
**Islamic Civilisation**

## Chapter 25

# Emotional Blasting Therapy: A Psychotherapeutic Technique Invented by Early Muslim Physicians

Malik Badri

**Abstract** Modern behavioural therapists have successfully experimented with a therapeutic technique known as ‘flooding’, which inverts the gradual approach of systematic desensitisation. Systematic desensitisation and practical retraining are based on two important principles. Firstly, it invokes in the patient a response which is *opposed* to the conditioned response or symptom, which needs to be extinguished, such as muscular and psychological relaxation or tranquillising drugs as opposed to anxiety. The second is to *gradually* introduce the stimulus or event that causes the anxiety until you reach the highest point in your hierarchy. Ancient Muslim physicians invented an effective emotionally induced therapy which suggests that flooding, exposure or implosive therapy works, not simply because patients are getting used to what caused them anxiety but simply because *any sudden dose of a high emotional response is beneficial in treating a neurotic disorder*. This article elucidates on this therapeutic invention used for the first time by Muhammad ibn Zakariya Razi (Arrazi) and Ibn Sina. Both great Muslim physicians believed that an unexpected high emotional outburst has a quick curative effect on psychological, psychosomatic and even organic disorders. They invented this therapy, which is not yet fully utilised by modern psychotherapists. The author recommends that whatever could be really beneficial to Muslims should be Islamised and that this Islamisation can benefit much from the contributions of our early Muslim thinkers and physicians. More intensive studies in this field should involve searches for psychological material widely scattered in original Islamic sources and the works of ancient scholars and physicians.

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## 25.1 Introduction

Modern Muslim psychologists may say, ‘We realise now that early Muslim philosophers, psychologists and physicians contributed a great deal to psychotherapy, which we as contemporary Muslim psychologists have obviously underestimated and neglected. However, are there any therapeutic practices which they have used but Western psychology has not yet utilised?’ The answer to such a question is strongly affirmative.

Modern behavioural therapists have successfully experimented with a therapeutic technique known in the 60s as ‘flooding’, which inverts the gradual approach of systematic desensitisation. Systematic desensitisation and practical retraining are based on two important principles. The first is to invoke in the patient a response which is *opposed* to the conditioned response or symptom which is desired to be extinguished, such as muscular and psychological relaxation or tranquillising drugs, as opposed to anxiety. The second is to *gradually* introduce the stimulus or event that causes this anxiety until you reach the highest point in your hierarchy. Early Muslim therapists successfully used this technique.

In treatment by flooding, however, no relaxing response is brought about and the patient is at once subjected to the most noxious stimulus in the hierarchy for prolonged periods without being allowed to escape until she/he realises that her/his anxiety was not based on any real danger. Though based on a different theoretical background, implosive therapy shares the same practical applications as flooding. Both of these anxiety-induced therapies work to eliminate avoidance behaviour by invoking anxiety but preventing escape (Masters et al. 1987).

## 25.2 Some Early Muslim Psychotherapies

Ancient Muslim physicians invented a much more effective emotionally induced therapy which tempts one to believe that flooding, exposure or implosive therapy work, not simply because patients became accustomed to what caused them anxiety or that they were prevented from escape behaviour but simply because *any sudden dose of a high emotional response can be beneficial in treating a neurotic disorder*. Furthermore, and according to the works of these early Muslim physicians, this abrupt evoking of emotions *needs not be* related to the neurotic symptom being treated. It should only be very intense and unexpected. That is why the present writer wishes to call it *emotional blasting therapy*.

Theoretically, emotional blasting may offer a good explanation as to why flooding and implosive therapy were found to be useful, particularly with those exhibiting ‘generalised anxiety’ conditions (O’Leary and Wilson 1975). It seems that the headlong exposure of the most feared item in flooding brings about such tremendous emotional upheaval that the patient acquires benefit not only with his specific problem but also with other unspecified general anxiety-provoking situations, which

were not originally the objective of the therapy. On reading the literature on flooding and implosive therapy, one gets the impression that so many emotions are evoked in the patient that it may in some instances approach the likeness of emotional blasting of the early Muslim physicians. Listen, for example, to the horrifying scenes that a snake-phobic (*ophidiophobia*) patient was asked to imagine:

Okay, feel him (the snake) coiling around your hand,...touching you, slimy, now he is going up to your shoulder and he crawls there and he is sitting on your chest and he is looking you right in the eye. He is big and he is black and he is ugly... Picture his face; look at his eyes; look at those sharp fangs. Feel him bite at your face;...feel his fangs go right in your cheeks; and the blood is coming out on your face now...feel it biting your eye and it is going to pull your eye right out and down on your cheek. (Masters et al. 1987, p. 316)

The following therapeutic invention of early Muslim doctors first utilised by Muhammad ibn Zakariya Razi (Arrazi; 854–925) and Ibn Sina (c. 980–1037) is now elucidated. Both great physicians believed that an unexpected high emotional outburst has a quick curative effect on psychological, psychosomatic and even organic disorders. The more intense and abrupt the emotion, the more effective it would be in changing the imbalanced humours of the body and in treating the physical or psychological problem at hand. Christoph Bürgel (1973) noted that this therapeutic use of explosive emotion originated with these early Muslim doctors. They are the inventors of this therapy, which is not yet fully utilised by modern psychotherapists.

A woman who complained from what seems to be a hysterical paralysis of the arm, and not the back as some references mention, was healed by Ibn Sina by using the sudden emotion of shame. Following his instructions, the patient was brought to him stripped from all her clothes, saving a piece of long cloth wrapped around her waist like a Yemeni or Southeast Asian *sarung*. He tied her healthy arm behind her back so that she cannot use it. In the presence of her brother and father, Ibn Sina held the cloth tightly and suddenly pulled it downwards, as if he were going to expose her nakedness. In a spontaneous move, the young lady quickly moved her clenched supposedly ‘paralysed’ arm to hold the cloth in place. The sudden intense emotion of shame was much greater than what the imbalanced body or mind could sustain and was more than the original anxiety which precipitated her neurotic symptom. She was cured in one session! (Dols 1992).

Arrazi used the emotion of anger combined with fear to treat Prince Mansur from a rheumatic and/or psychosomatic condition of pain in his joints and back which prevented the *amīr* from standing upright and moving freely. The medicines and potions of all the doctors, including Arrazi’s, failed to produce any healing effect on the prince. Arrazi finally decided to use ‘psychotherapy’, to which he referred by the modern Arabic term *al-‘ilāj al-naḥsānī*. He informed the prince that he was going to use a new kind of therapy which would definitely cure him, but that he needed the *amīr*’s fastest horse and mule. Arrazi took the prince to a Turkish hot bath outside the city where the horse was saddled and the mule loaded with his private things, food and drink, ready for his planned escape!

Unaware of his physician’s plot, the prince entered the hot bath unaccompanied by any of his servants. As he fully relaxed in the steamy bath, Arrazi suddenly

pulled out a large dagger and shouted angrily at him reminding him of the insolence of his soldiers who brought him there by force to treat him. He put up a frightening expression and threatened to kill the prince who had none of his guards to protect him. The prince, in an outburst of mixed emotions of rage and fear, leapt to his feet like a compressed spring. Seeing this, Arrazi threw the dagger to the side and ran out to flee on the fast steed. Later he wrote to the prince congratulating him on his recovery and explaining why he had intentionally provoked his highness to such an excessive dose of explosive emotions. He was later immensely rewarded (Zubair 1995).

### 25.3 Similar Modern Psychotherapies

If one ventures to explain this phenomenon from the point of view of modern Pavlovian learning theory, one would say that sudden excessive emotion may weaken or even eliminate the previously learned connections or associations between conditioned stimuli and acquired conditioned responses or neurotic symptoms. Pavlov himself reported that the dogs he trained to salivate upon hearing a bell or metronome lost their acquired conditioned responses when they were saved after being greatly terrified by an unexpected flood that swept them out of the safety of his laboratory. However, significantly, this conditioned stimulus-conditioned response (CS-CR) association of dogs is an obvious oversimplification of the phenomenon, and so three modern examples from human experiences are here provided.

The first is the much quoted phenomenon of the spontaneous remission of a number of Egyptian psychotic and neurotic in-patients after their mental hospital was bombarded during air raids in 1958. Egypt's largest mental hospital, Al-Abbasiyah, is located very close to some military barracks in Cairo. During the Israeli, British and French military attack on Egypt after President Nasir nationalised the Suez Canal, their planes mistook the hospital for the military barracks and the inmates were suddenly subjected to a barrage of exploding bombs. Few of them were killed or injured, but the unjustified air aggression resulted in the unexpected pleasant restoration to mental health of a group of patients who suddenly regained contact with reality and lost their delusions, hallucinations and depressions.

The second case is that of a Saudi traditional healer who practised in a small Saudi Arabian town. He hunted two wild wolves and used extended chains to tie them in a long veranda at the back of his house. When his 'diagnosis' showed that a patient could be helped by emotional blasting, he would bring her into the house by the back door leading to the veranda on the opposite side to where the wolves were kept. As soon as she entered, the wolves suddenly attack her, running wildly along the porch, but are held by their long chains only a few metres from her. This healer was actually able to cure or greatly improve many patients before he was arrested and imprisoned when one of the chains gave way and the wolf actually attacked one patient causing her serious bodily harm! This case was communicated to the writer by Saudi Arabia's pioneer psychiatrist Professor Osama Arradi.

The third illustration comes from the West. Dr. Hasabu Sulaiman, the well-known Sudanese psychiatrist, told the author the secret of a European psychiatrist who became very famous in treating female patients who suffered from *aphonia*, a psychological disorder in which the patient loses her ability to speak above a whisper. He used to take his patient to a small soundproof room in his clinic. After she enters and takes a seat, he closes the door with a large lock and begins to look at the patient in a strange manner. Many people believe that, after treating mad patients for many years, psychiatrists themselves become abnormal. So the patient starts to become terrified. Without saying a word, the doctor opens a drawer, takes out a large knife and suddenly jumps at the patient. The poor woman who was unable to utter a sound higher than a whisper now screams like a police siren. The doctor then smiles and calms her down after she finds that she has regained her ability to speak loudly. It is a one-session therapy in which the Western doctor has literally duplicated Arrazi's treatment of the prince. Some may say that hysterical symptoms can be treated easily, but few can actually do it in one session without stimulating unexpected emotions through painful electric shocks or by hypnotic suggestion.

## 25.4 Conclusion and Recommendations

For psychology to be really useful to Muslims, it must be Islamised, and such Islamisation can benefit much from the contributions of early Muslim thinkers and physicians. Also, those who wish to carry out more intensive studies in this field should be prepared to patiently look for psychological material widely scattered in original Islamic sources and in the works of ancient scholars and physicians. One should not expect to find many books or manuscripts that discuss any psychological issues under specific pertinent contemporary titles. However, if one diligently searches, he is bound to extract valuable gems from ancient original references on *tafsīr*, *Sunnah* and *sīrah*, the biography of the companions of the Prophet (pbuh) and in books and manuscripts which come under diversified titles such as the purification of the soul (*tazkiyat al-nafs*) and Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*).

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# Chapter 26

## Tracing the History of Astrolabe Inventions Across Civilisations

Mohd Hafiz Safiai and Ibnor Azli Ibrahim

**Abstract** This article surveys the history and application of astrolabes from before Islam's ascendance until the peak of the golden age of Islamic astronomy (*falak*). It also showcases the perpetuity of astrolabes as a multipurpose astronomical instrument used by a number of civilisations, Islamic and non-Islamic. The qualitative research method used involved document analysis and observations and the review of works on astrolabes by numerous scholars on its use in the field of astronomy. History and *falak* books were referenced to understand the use of this instrument in Islamic astronomy, which is currently known as *astrofiqh*. The astrolabe is a multi-purpose analogue instrument for astronomical calculation and observation. The astrolabe invention became a symbol of ingenuity of Islamic scholars, and the concept behind it became a foundation for development of the latest digital astronomical instruments. Thus, knowledge of the astrolabe's development should be recorded to document one of the glories of Islamic civilisation while acting to inspire and enhance related fields such as the development of *astrofiqh* in Malaysia.

### 26.1 Introduction

The advancement of modern technology can be observed today in the various functions of the computer. Parallel to the advancement of modern technology, the computer has been modified and upgraded over time. Many people are unaware that the basic computer was invented and used a hundred years ago. The modern computer creates a digital and mathematic model system. Both of these features are used to follow a set of instructions in order to function as an automatic system. It is different from the analogue computer used a hundred years ago. An analogue computer created a system physically and required some human skill in order for it to

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function. Such a type of computer in an earlier form manifested itself in what is known as the ‘astrolabe’.

The word ‘astrolabe’ actually derives from the Greek word *asturlabun*, meaning ‘star holder’. The astrolabe is an ancient analogue computer, which functioned to solve various problems involving astronomical calculation. Collins English Dictionary (2009) described an astrolabe as consisting of a graduated circular disc with a movable sighting device. The American Heritage Science Dictionary (2005) further defined an astrolabe as:

An ancient instrument used widely in medieval times by navigators and astronomers to determine latitude, longitude, and time of the day. The device employed a disk with 360 degrees marked on its circumference. Users took readings from an indicator that pivoted around the center of the suspended device like the hand of a clock. The astrolabe was replaced by the sextant in the 18th century.

Random House Dictionary (2013) described the astrolabe as an astronomical instrument for taking the altitude of the sun or stars and for solutions of other problems in astronomy or navigation, used by Greek astronomers from about 200 BC and by Arab astronomers from the Middle Ages. Al-Farghani (2005) emphasised that the astrolabe was invented to observe and calculate the positions and movements of objects such as stars and planets in the celestial sphere. The astrolabe was an instrument commonly used in Islamic civilisation. It is unique in that it can still be operated and is useful even today. Through its invention as an analogue computer, Islamic civilisation has shown its ingenuity in astronomy and technical instrumentation, and such knowledge derived from the astrolabe should be preserved to ensure its capability is not lost.

## 26.2 Early Astrolabe History in Greek Civilisation

The history of the astrolabe invention includes aspects of technical and scientific knowledge which are elucidated in treatises and in practice. Knowledge of astronomy was sought for thousands of years by ancient civilisations, such as the Babylonian and Greek. According to Nallino (1911), during that particular period, astronomy, known as the knowledge of stars, was used for two main purposes: (1) to determine the movement of stars in order to calculate the seasons and wind directions and (2) to predict human fates (i.e. astrology). The history of the astrolabe began during the glorious Greek civilisation and was made famous by its scientific achievements. The knowledge of stereographic projections of celestial objects existed long before in the period of Apollonius (225 BC), but Hipparchus (190–120 BC) showcased his astronomical expertise regarding this knowledge through his theories related to astrolabe projections. According to Van der Waerden (1951), it is true that Hipparchus is known by his expertise in stereographic projection, but he did not invent the astrolabe. However, the existence of the contemporary astrolabe is based on his theories about the celestial realm.

The Hipparchus theory of stereographic projection has been used in the mechanised construction of such items as the anaphoric clock. According to Vitruvius (1981), a Roman writer and architect, this particular clock is the first machine invented and which functioned based on stereographic projection theory. The clock was built in Alexandria, Egypt, and was equipped with a set of stars moving around it showing the hours in a day. The technology then developed and spread to Salzburg, Austria and the northeast area of France. The role of Ptolemy<sup>1</sup> (90–168 CE) in astronomical research brought huge benefits to many of his contemporary scientists. One of his greatest works was *Planisphaerium*, which discussed horoscope instruments. Regarding the astrolabe invention, Ptolemy is considered the first to invent it. He finally managed this by using Hipparchus' theory of stereographic projection combined with his own work on the instrument.

Latham (1917) argued that the history of the astrolabe invention began in the period of Ptolemy, not Hipparchus. The astrolabe invented by Ptolemy was a simple version in regard to its construction and functions. Muslim scientists would later modify and enhance this instrument to provide more functions, not only to determine latitude and longitude.

The above view is supported by Ionides (1904) who agreed that invention of the astrolabe began with Greek civilisation. He opined that the concept of the astrolabe existed in the period of Hipparchus, yet the process of constructing the instrument only began in Ptolemy's period, and most astronomy historians agree that Ptolemy was the first to invent the astrolabe. The astrolabe, however, was modified by Muslim scientists according to the needs of Islamic civilisation, especially related to matters of Islamic worship, e.g. calculation of prayer times and determination of the *qiblah* (direction towards *Ka'abah*).

Neugebauer (1949) analysed the history of the astrolabe invention and astronomical *zīj* (tables) in Greek civilisation. He rejected statements that the astrolabe had existed during the periods of Apollonius, Archimedes, Exodus or Hipparchus, prior to Ptolemy. He also opined that Ptolemy was the first person who invented the astrolabe around 150 CE. He believed that Ptolemy managed to invent it because of his excellent knowledge and skills about celestial objects. However, he did not deny that the knowledge and concept of the astrolabe existed before 150 CE.

In conclusion we accept that Ptolemy was the first person to invent a simple astrolabe. However, only after the instrument had been modified and enhanced by Muslim scientists did the astrolabe gain many more functions, especially for astronomical calculations.

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<sup>1</sup>His real name was Claudius Ptolemaeus. He worked in Alexandria around 127–151 CE and was a highly regarded Greek scientist. Among his famous works was *Almagest*, which discussed the distance between earth-sun and earth-moon. A catalogue containing more than 1000 stars is attached to his book. See Fix (2008, pp. 50–51).

### 26.3 Astrolabe Development in Islamic Civilisation

Knowledge and ideas developed by scientists since the Greek civilisation continued to evolve until the time of the Islamic civilisation. Undeniably, some mathematical concepts in astronomy created by Greek scientists began to be studied and adopted by Muslim scientists during the eighth century through the translation of Sanskrit and Pahlavi texts (Pingree 1973). However, the wisdom of Muslim scientists led to science becoming more pragmatic by modifying and applying ancient astronomical theories and concepts. Theories and concepts which were modified or created by Muslim scientists are still being used today in solving certain astronomical problems.

Islamic civilisation is very extensive, covering a range of countries and cultures. Many contributions and successes were achieved by the advances of classical Muslim scholars. This exemplifies the benefits of Islam as a religion in that it is capable of developing a civilisation that elevates human dignity and intellect (Ibn al-Nadim 1994). During the Abbasid Caliphate, scientific and technological fields of knowledge received much attention. Many Greek works were translated into Arabic, covering various fields of science, including astronomy, astrology and the invention of the simple astrolabe. The astrolabe was introduced and developed in the first eight centuries of Islamic civilisation.

This development partly resulted from the efforts of the 'Abbasid Caliph al-Ma'mun, in advancing uses of the astrolabe in daily life. Further, he utilised the astrolabe as a tool in administrating Muslim worship practices. The close relationship between Islam and astronomy opened up opportunities for the invention and further development of various functions. To calculate the prayer times and determine the direction of Mecca – both challenging problems – requires good knowledge and high skills in astronomy. Through use of the astrolabe, the problems related to prayer times and *qiblah* direction could be resolved more quickly and easily (Hayton 2012).

For centuries, Arabic, Persian and Hebrew scientists attempted to write and publish systematic treatises on the use of the astrolabe so that it would be easily learned and understood. Beginning in the ninth century, treatises on the astrolabe were published, such as by Masha'Allah, a Jewish scientist from Basra. However, his original pamphlet written in Arabic has been lost. Fortunately, its translation in Latin is extant and readable (Lorch 2013).

Among traditional works related to the astrolabe which still survives is one written by al-Khwarizmi. He authored two short treatises concerning the development and functions of the astrolabe. Other traditional works on the astrolabe, which survive, belonged to 'Ali ibn 'Isa and Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Kathir. Aside from writing, 'Ali ibn 'Isa was also involved in observations conducted in Baghdad and Damascus under the supervision of Caliph al-Ma'mun. In the early part of the eleventh century, the Persian scientist al-Biruni, famous for *The Book of Instruction in the Elements of the Art of Astrology*, discussed the construction, parts and functions of the astrolabe (Sarton 1935). Muslim scientists also managed to invent a newly

enhanced astrolabe. The astrolabe enhancements were then very highly respected and admired. The most commonly used astrolabe as a navigational instrument was the mariner's astrolabe. Many instrument makers began to learn and develop skills and build businesses related to the astrolabe.

In the process of enhancing the astrolabe, there were no strict guidelines for designing and decoration. Decoration of the astrolabe was usually based on its maker's creativity. Among the common elements was placement of the maker's name and signature on the astrolabe. Some liked to put information about the date and place where the astrolabe had been made. If there was such information, it was then easy to detect the origin of the astrolabe in order to identify and understand the relationship between the manufacturer, his environment and the specific technology.

Ibn al-Zarqali is among the Muslim scientists who excelled in the development of the astrolabe. He was famous for his skill in creating tools and had invented his own form of astrolabe (Kahhalah 1972). He also created *ṣafīḥa* as a refinement incorporated within the astrolabe. *Ṣafīḥa* is an Arabic translation of the English word 'tympan'. It consists of the local latitude of a place with the altitude and azimuth and also functioned as a star map (Hill 1993). Ibn al-Zarqali also wrote a book describing the astrolabe which was later translated by Western scholars into Latin (Ahmad 2003). He is known for his skills of observation, and he was very skilled in determining the time of the eclipse and created a compass to determine the distances between the moon and the earth and between the stars and the sun. He also compiled the Toledan Tables which were derived from Ptolemy and al-Khwarizmi (Samso 1994).

The effects of technical innovation from Islamic civilisation can also be seen in India. Scientists, who were much-travelled, such as al-Biruni, introduced the astrolabe to India. In the fourteenth century, Sultan Firuz Shah Tughluq funded the further development of the astrolabe. In the meantime, the Sanskrit treatise regarding the astrolabe, *Yantraraja*, meaning 'king of astronomical instruments', was written by Mahendra Suri, a monk (Sarma 1999). According to Sarma (2000), in the middle of the sixteenth century, the uses of the astrolabe expanded into government administration. The new ruler acknowledged the astrological approach in managing and administering the country's problems and introduced it for its political value. Among the well-known Mughal rulers at that time was Humayun. Under his rule, Lahore (now in Pakistan) became a manufacturing centre of the Indo-Persian astrolabe (Erskine 1995). One of the astrolabe makers, Diya' al-Din Muhammad, constructed more than 30 astrolabes from 1645 to 1680 CE, and his family produced more than 100 pieces (Sarma 2009).

Ohashi (1997) observed that Lahore is not the only place which produced astrolabes in India. Jaipur also became an important manufacturing centre. This was the ultimate achievement gained by the contemporary ruler Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh II who promoted expansion of scientific and technological knowledge. In addition to this, the emperor wrote a book discussing the astrolabe. According to Soonawala (1952), the instruments in India, especially in Jaipur, were famous for their distinctive size which was appropriate for its latitude at 27° North. The emperor was also responsible for the construction of five astronomical observatories in India.

## 26.4 Early Modern History of Astrolabe in Europe

The astrolabe was introduced to Spain through Cordoba, the Umayyad capital. Scholars across Spain quickly took the opportunity to learn and understand the astrolabe. Beginning in the late tenth century, the astrolabe and treatises related to its uses had been produced by Muslims in Spain. At first, all these astrolabes were similar to those found in other countries. On the initiative of the astrolabe makers in Spain, they began to modify the standard pattern to differentiate themselves from other manufactures, highlighting the distinctive features of Spain (Evans 1998). For example, they changed the language used. Originally, astrolabes were produced in Arabic, but this was later changed to Latin. This aimed to facilitate a better understanding of the astrolabe by visiting scholars who came to Spain to learn about the knowledge of Islamic and Greek civilisations. Through translation, they brought back this knowledge about the astrolabe to their countries. Translated items included the names of the months and zodiac constellations. The ready availability of these is considered one of the major factors that accelerated the spread of the knowledge and applications of astrolabe technology throughout Europe (Gibbs and Saliba 1984; Saliba 2007). From the eleventh until the thirteenth century, most astrolabes in Europe were brought in from Spain.

Beginning in the fourteenth century, astrolabe knowledge was developing rapidly in Europe. A set of guidelines for astrolabe construction and uses was first published and became one of the most important teachings in European universities. Chaucer,<sup>2</sup> an English writer, opined that he should send his son to Oxford University to study the astrolabe and its treatises. Acknowledging the importance of the astrolabe at that time, he had written a guide for using the astrolabe, entitled *A Treatise on the Astrolabe* (Chaucer 1391).

The knowledge of the astrolabe was not limited to universities only but was even more popular among the royals. According to Gibbs and Saliba (1984), rulers throughout Europe began to collect, study and use the astrolabe as a support tool in better managing and administering their countries. Among the purported regular functions of the astrolabe used by them was to determine the best time to declare war and attack their enemies. The astrolabe was correspondingly used to determine the best time to end a war and subsequently became a symbol of peace. According to Glick et al. (2014), the sixteenth century was when the astrolabe reached its ultimate height of development in Europe. Many treatises and reading materials were published then in small volumes and low prices for public reading. They emphasised the principles of astrolabe uses such as to determine the time and the zodiacal constellations. Better-quality larger treatises, which included images, were also published. These higher-quality treatises were equipped with more details including on its invention and the diversity of its functions. Several series of these treatises were printed and translated into Latin for a wider market.

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<sup>2</sup>Geoffrey Chaucer was an English philosopher born in 1343 in London. He was admired throughout mediaeval Europe. He was also active as a writer and astronomer. See Rudd (2001, pp. 1–5).

The sixteenth century experienced the rapid development of astrolabe makers in Europe. Germany was a country that practised traditional iron work and became a centre for the manufacture of instruments in the late fifteenth century. As copper prices were cheaper in Germany than other countries in Europe, Germany could monopolise the manufacture of instruments, especially the astrolabe (Turner 1994). According to King (1999), one of the famous astrolabe makers at that time was Georg Hartmann. In his workshop, he produced a large number of instruments in accordance with desired specifications and patterns. He was also the first person who made the astrolabe from paper and wood.

In the seventeenth century, the process of manufacturing astrolabes slumped dramatically in Europe. By the early eighteenth century, astrolabe manufacturing activities almost ceased in line with the invention of higher technology instruments, such as the sextant around 1730. Scholars eventually became more interested in collecting astrolabes as antiques. Some, however, having a historical interest of instruments, collected astrolabes to be stored and maintained (Gibbs and Saliba 1984).

The world's largest collection of astrolabes is at the Museum of the History of Science located in Oxford, United Kingdom. A number of these astrolabes sourced from three continents, covering the period from the ninth to mid-seventeenth century, are illustrated in Appendix 1. As a department at the University of Oxford, the museum's role is to maintain and allow historians to study the artefacts and to facilitate their public exhibition. The museum carries approximately 20,000 historical scientific instruments covering a wide range of fields, such as mathematics, optics, chemistry, philosophy and medicine – from the Middle Ages until the twentieth century. The museum also displays manuscripts and pictures for historical reference.

## 26.5 Conclusion

During the extensive period of Islamic civilisation, knowledge of the astrolabe was acquired, developed, updated and expanded from India to Spain. With the rapid development of the astrolabe in the Muslim world by scholars and craftsmen, many Latin scientists came to Spain to learn and undergo training in its valuable uses. Once they learned and mastered this knowledge, they would return home and bring along the instrument and related astrolabe texts. They taught and developed further this knowledge outside of Spain. These efforts created many skilled European scientists knowledgeable in astrolabe technology. This is proved by the rapid development of astrolabe technology in Europe in the sixteenth century as well as being an incentive for the creation of other astronomical instruments in the West. The Muslim world continued to produce astrolabes for a further 200 years. Among the famous Muslim astrolabe makers was the firm of Muhammad bin Ahmad al-Battuta, who still produced astrolabes until the eighteenth century in Morocco. The concepts and ideas of the astrolabe invention, which was strongly enhanced by the early Muslim scientists, helped the advance of modern instrumentation technologies until today.

### Appendix 1



Syria (end of 9<sup>th</sup> century)



Isfahan (1221)



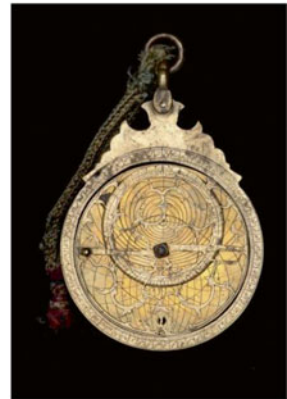
Egypt (1282)



Spain (1300)



Germany (1585)



India (1647)

Source: Museum of the History of Science, Oxford University, Oxford, UK. Accessed from <http://www.mhs.ox.ac.uk/collections/>

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